

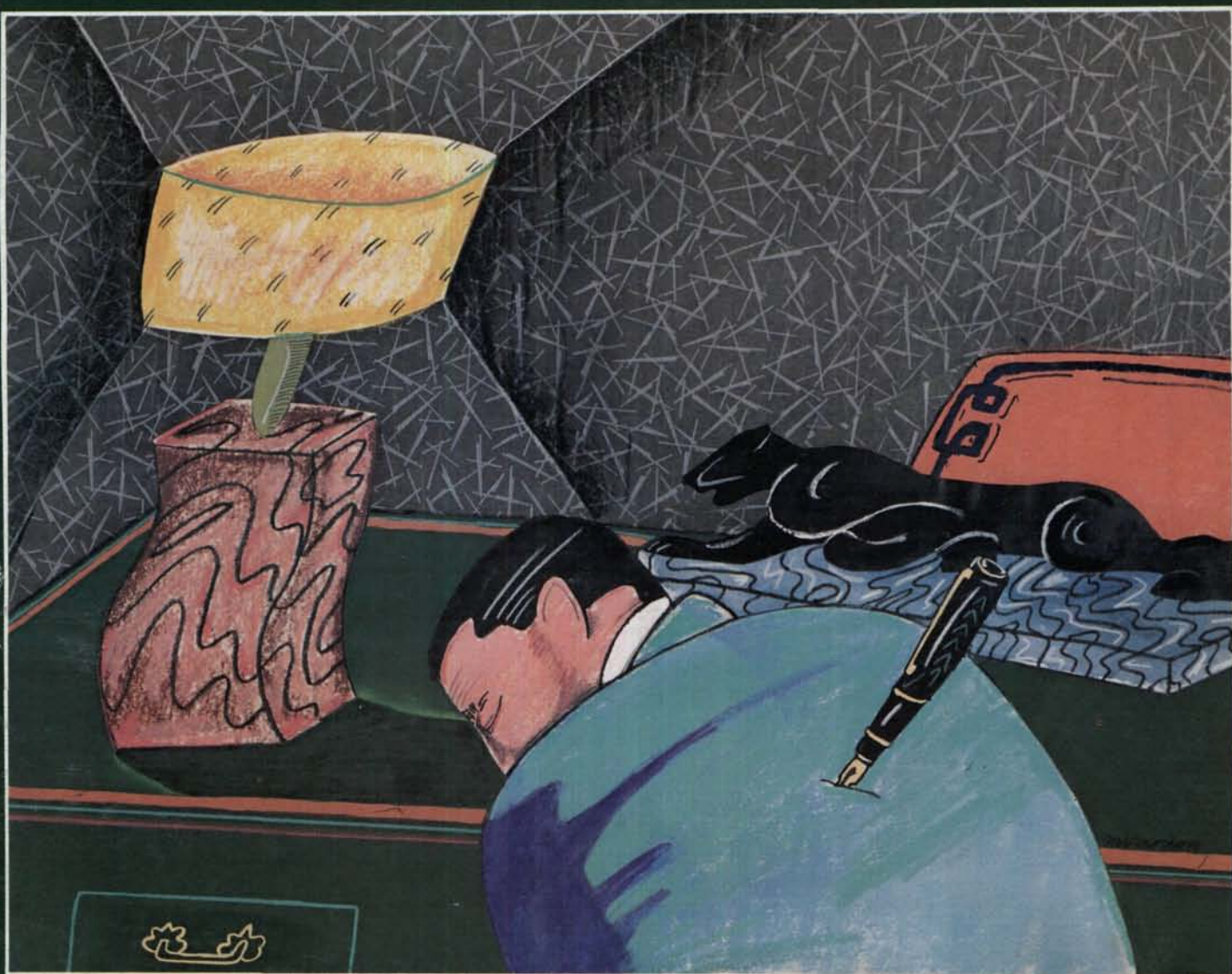
Two Fantasies: Vanessa Redgrave's Palestine, Justice Powell's Harvard
Morton Kondracke on Pat Moynihan's Shadow Government

THE NEW REPUBLIC

July 22, 1978

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from Washington
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Tax Blitz

Jack Kennedy bet his political future on a tax cut that worked. He did it on the urging of his Camelot-in-residence economist, Walter Heller, lean, witty, six-foot-three, liberal professor from the University of Minnesota. The idea was to pay for it from deficit financing. Conservatives cried horror. Inside the White House there was criticism too. Why, Heller wasn't even a Harvard man. But he stood up against 15 other advisers in a showdown in the Oval Office: the economy was turning sluggish, the administration's support was going sour, something had to be done. Heller got the Kennedy nod. The plan worked . . . until Lyndon Johnson let inflation get away from him in the Vietnam war (he rejected the counterbalancing tax cut the economy then needed).

Now a quite extraordinary thing has happened in Washington. The Republicans have grabbed the same detested idea Kennedy embraced 16 years earlier and have made it their platform for the fall election. The slogan is emblazoned on their banner: "Deficit Financing!" To put it another way the call is: "Don't balance the budget!" People gape. In the memory of the oldest inhabitant nothing has been seen like it. "The Republican National Committee," announced Bill Brock, its chairman, "backed by the most complete agreement on an economic issue in modern Republican history, is about to launch a top-priority campaign to take the issue of a badly needed, meaningful tax cut for all Americans directly to the people." Yes sir, there's going to be a GOP tax "blitz," with two chartered jetliners taking the word to the nation, supporting the tax bill introduced by Senator William Roth of Delaware and Representative Jack Kemp of New York. It will lower everybody's income taxes by 33

percent over three years, and cut corporate taxes, too. It will cost \$114 billion in the short run, but the theory is that it will prime the pump in no time, and balance the budget by increased revenue in a year or two. The bill is popular, it has 176 congressional sponsors. And that old meany, President Carter, says he will veto it.

It would take too long to be ironic about how the political parties have changed roles. The overmastering fact is that the US economy is in trouble, bad trouble. This is showing up in dozens of ways, statistical and political: the Proposition 13 slash of property taxes in California, the Kemp-Roth raid in Washington, the anxieties at the summit meeting at Bonn. (President Carter had better get support from West Germany and Japan; he's in a lot worse trouble than Kennedy was in the early 1960s.)

What are the chances of a recession? Economist Galbraith says there'll be one if we follow the policy of tightening money, tightening the budget. Walter Heller guesses one-in-three. Raymond Saulnier, Ike's old economic adviser, says 50-50. Public figures dislike discussing the matter because it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Nobody questions that the domestic and international stakes are high. There's always a chance of a tariff war. A lot of the US banks are loaded down with loans to shaky third world countries to tide them over the energy shortage. Senator William Proxmire, chairman of the Banking Committee, calls them "problem banks." The equity they have is "grossly inadequate," he says.

"The 10 biggest banks in this country have capital of less than five percent of their assets. The Federal Reserve rule-of-thumb is that they ought to have eight percent. The biggest bank in the country has only three percent." Leaders at Bonn are fully aware of these facts.

Democrats don't know what to do about Kemp-Roth. Polls show that tax cuts are enormously popular; and that a lot of people are justly outraged at finding themselves in higher income tax brackets because of inflation, although their salaries have lower purchasing power. Will the nation let go in a fit of frustrated anger as the Californians did on Proposition 13? There is no logic in this. If there's one thing the people want, say the polls, it's to fight inflation by balancing the budget, but they want tax cuts, too. Proposition 13 gave nearly two-thirds of the tax savings to corporations and big property owners; it

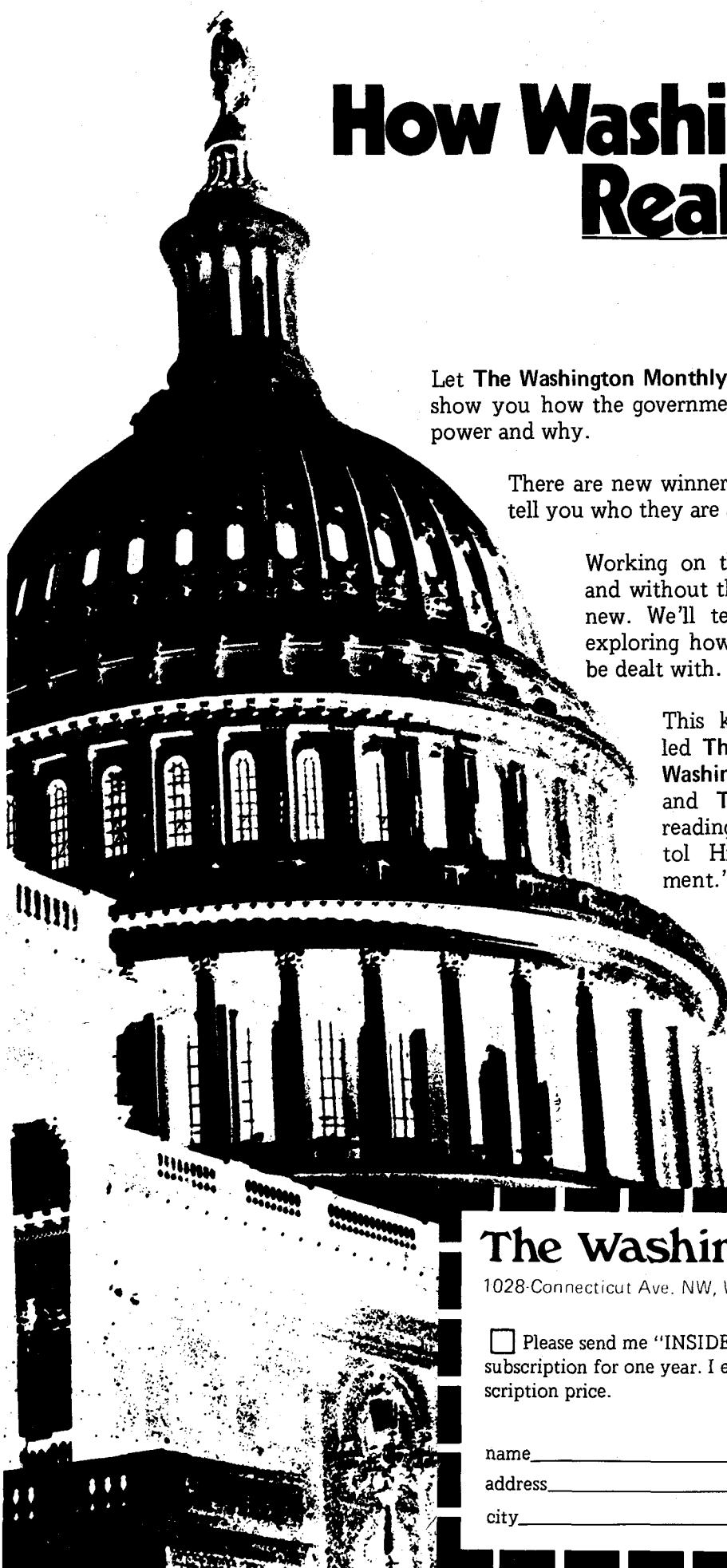
put the heaviest burden on "the poorest of our people," says Galbraith, "who depend most on the schools, on the police, on keeping the streets clean, on parks and recreation." But the measure had overwhelming support.

Ultraconservative Harry Byrd is still at his post declaring that deficit spending is putting the Treasury into debt at the rate of a billion dollars a week (correct) but his fickle Republican allies are deserting him for tax cuts, without saying how they will raise the money, or how they will cut spending. There's a new girl in town and they are courting her. She's called "the Laffer Curve." This curvaceous temptress is fathered by economics professor Arthur Laffer, University of Southern California, who thinks that cuts in tax rates may well mean enlarged revenues; yes, he tells the conservative American Enterprise Institute (known as the Republican government-in-exile here) that Kemp-Roth may well balance the budget in "a very few years."

It's music to the Republican leadership. It's endorsed, too, by articulate Alan Greenspan, chairman of the GOP's economic advisory council and Jerry Ford's top economist. Greenspan, erstwhile supporter of Ayn Rand's dogma of "rational selfishness," once wrote that "deficit spending is simply a scheme for the hidden confiscation of wealth," and in confirmation hearings said he opposed the graduated income tax. Alas, now this staunch Puritan is beguiled by a curl and a Laffer Curve. Herbert Stein, an economist of sterner stuff, from Nixon days, warns that the time span for the Laffer Curve may be "quite long," and at one point mentions "thirty years."

Walter Heller, one of the few comprehensible economists, testified here the other day on these perplexing matters. He said: 1) the Kemp-Roth view of the Kennedy-Johnson 1964 tax cut "is simply wrong"—the conditions were different then; 2) the Laffer Curve is a hussy with no visible means of support (empirical); and 3) that an unmodified Kemp-Roth program would produce a "huge surge in demand that would overwhelm our supply capacity and soon generate soaring deficits and roaring inflation."

As the GOP tax-blitz jetliners swoop about the country you can decide for yourself. Heller thinks there's still some slack in the economy and that a modest tax cut of around \$20 billion is safe and will help neutralize payroll tax boosts and the "inflation tax." Carter agrees.



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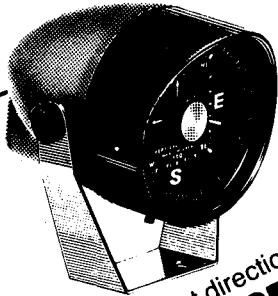
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July 22, 1978



Steel Trap

Last January the Carter administration put into effect its program to reduce steel imports. In May, after the normal four-month lag between steel orders and deliveries, the plan bore its first fruit. Following a surge of imports ordered just before the deadline, shipments of foreign steel fell to 1.5 million tons in May—16 percent below the previous May and 25 percent below April. The Treasury Department said the figures for June should be even lower, since some of the imports counted in the May statistics actually arrived in April.

Carter's program came at the end of a bad year for the American steel industry. It was a response to unrelenting pressure for action to save US firms and workers from the ravages of competition. Sixty thousand American steelworkers lost their jobs last year to foreign producers; the list of cities affected by plant closings and layoffs read like an atlas of American steelmaking—Youngstown, Buffalo, Middletown, Johnstown. Instead of slapping foreign producers with tariffs or import quotas—crude techniques that mesh poorly with Carter's campaign commitment to free trade—Treasury recommended a system of reference or trigger prices for foreign steel. Any sale below these established prices would trigger a prompt anti-dumping investigation and, in most cases, a heavy fine.

Ostensibly the reference prices are aimed only at preventing foreign steelmakers from "dumping" their goods here—selling below their own cost or below their prices at home. The practice is already illegal, but prosecution of violations is difficult and time-consuming. The average case takes more than a year to resolve; imposition of duties may take another year or two. Needing a scapegoat for their poor competitive showing last year, American producers settled on dumping; that is, on unfair behavior by their foreign competitors. They were skeptical about Treasury's scheme, but were partly mollified when the actual

minimum prices were issued. On the average, the trigger prices were considerably higher than anyone had expected, and only 5.5 percent below the American producers' own prices. A \$215 million loan guarantee package helped to sweeten the deal.

It would be a mistake to expect American steel executives to be grateful for the decline in imports. US Steel chairman Edgar Speer waxed sarcastic at the news. "I don't get goose pimples yet," he told *The New York Times*. Elsewhere the response was even more scornful. Frederick Langenberg, who heads the American Iron and Steel Institute (the industry trade association) was "alarmed and surprised" that foreign sales weren't even lower. The administration, he told *The Washington Post*, is "running out of excuses."

President Carter's feelings about these slaps in the face went unrecorded, but he couldn't have been very surprised. Since he proposed the trigger price system, the nation's steel executives have outdone each other in demonstrating their ingratitude. Besides constantly sniping at the administration's lack of ferocity in repulsing the invasion of foreign steel, they have raised prices twice and threatened to raise them even higher. So far this year they have increased prices more than nine percent—more than in either of the previous two years. More increases are surely on the way. Speer recently got into a spitting match with Carter's inflation fighter, Robert Strauss, when he announced that his firm wouldn't be bound by administration requests to hold this year's price increases below last year's. Strauss insisted that Speer was out of step with his industrial colleagues. Most likely time will prove Strauss wrong.

If these developments leave Carter perplexed and nostalgic for the days when a Democratic administration could send FBI agents to harass truculent steel tycoons (as Kennedy's Justice Department did), he has

no one to blame but himself. Big steel's price hikes, in the face of stagnant demand, are possible only because of Carter's action against foreign competitors. His reference price scheme, after all, grew not out of any sincere worry about dumping, but out of a clear political need to bail out the domestic steel industry. High unemployment among steelworkers had undermined his efforts to demonstrate progress in revitalizing the economy, particularly endangering his shaky support from organized labor. In all fairness, Carter didn't want to resort to protectionist measures. He stalled for months, blamed American firms for their own problems, refused to relax environmental rules and prayed that some sunshine would poke through the clouds. But things got no better, and with the ominous approach of an election year, he finally buckled.

His plan at least had the virtue of ingenuity, and it managed to provide the substance of protection without the appearance. Technically, since the trigger prices were intended only to prevent dumping, they didn't constitute a trade barrier—thus defusing criticism from free traders, and possibly even lessening the chances of foreign retaliation. But since they were pegged high enough to discourage purchases from abroad, the minimum prices promised the same result as more overt measures: to stem the flow of imports and thus shore up the American steel industry.

In fact, the only flaw in Carter's proposal was that it rested on a lie. The Common Market countries have been selling consistently below their average costs and the Japanese have done so in some instances, but neither is selling below marginal cost—the cost of the steel currently being produced. Marginal cost pricing is not anti-competitive behavior, but exactly the opposite. Faced with a sluggish worldwide market and a great deal of unused capacity, foreign steelmakers have slashed prices to the bone in order to keep production going. But they are not selling any steel for less than the extra money they must spend to produce it, and so they are not selling it at a loss. During the 1973-74 boom, prices soared in response to sharp rises in demand—and, not coincidentally, imports fell. Since then, however, world steel trade has been a buyer's market, and American producers have not been able to match the deep price cuts of their rivals. Studies by the Council on Wage and Price Stability, the Federal Trade Commission, and Merrill Lynch all have concluded that the Japanese and European steelmakers aren't dumping steel in any significant quantities, if at all. Dumping is

going on only by Treasury's cockeyed definition, which includes any sale that doesn't show an eight percent profit margin. The judgment implicit in the Treasury's anti-dumping rules is that foreign producers should shut down their plants if they can't sell steel for at least eight percent above their average costs. To do otherwise is unfair "dumping." Trouble is, by this standard the American firms—with their average profit margin of 3.6 percent—are all dumping on the American market too.

Under normal circumstances, foreign firms would have nothing to gain by selling steel for less than it costs to produce. Nobody ever got rich that way. American firms contend that their rivals in Japan and Europe can afford to do it only because they get fat government subsidies. In fact, the subsidies are so puny they are hardly worth mentioning. The FTC estimated that the value of the Japanese government's aid to its industry amounts to an underwhelming 46 cents a ton. (The average ton costs over \$300.) In Germany, our chief competitor in the Common Market, the subsidy is only worth about 44 cents a ton, but the FTC calculated that a prohibition on the purchase of foreign coking coal more than cancelled out the aid.

The strongest competition for American steel comes from the Japanese, who can underprice American steelmakers because they're more adept at holding down costs. The Wage and Price Council, in a report last fall, figured Japanese production costs are 15 to 20 percent below American costs; even when transportation and duties are added on, the Japanese enjoy at least a five percent cost advantage (more on the West Coast). European steelmakers' costs run about the same as those in the US, but Common Market producers have been more willing to cut prices during bad years. Both the Japanese and the Europeans have been selling at 10 to 20 percent below American list prices. American firms also have been selling below their own list prices, and are likely to continue doing so until world steel demand picks up. Such aggressive competition may be hard on producers, but it's a blessing to consumers.

To the extent that American producers will admit to having higher production costs than the Japanese, they blame them mostly on strict US environmental regulations. The Wage and Price Council shot holes in this excuse. Current pollution control outlays, it noted, represent only about 2.5 percent of US production costs, although they may rise to five to 10 percent of total costs in the coming years. But American firms aren't the only ones that have to live with such rules. German steelmakers, for example, have spent about the same amount on pollution controls as their American counterparts. The Japanese actually have spent more, and they will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Right now about 20 percent of Japanese investment goes to meet environmental standards.

Most of the difference between American and

Coming Next Week:

Robert Lekachman on
slicing up a smaller pie.

Correspondence

Connoisseurship

To the editors:

Mr. Roger Rosenblatt has offered a damn fine guide to movie-going ("Back of the book," *TNR*, July 8 & 15). A couple of points struck me as unusual, however, given Mr. Rosenblatt's evident and wide experience.

I cannot understand Mr. Rosenblatt's liking for the fifth row from the front. In my experience, it is precisely this particular row from which one sees everything the movies, to be successful, must gloss over: make-up, bloodshot eyes, nylon stitches in Catherine the Great's gown, the down on Ingrid Bergman's upper lip. . . . And worst of all there is the back-stretching, limb-numbing posture which must be adopted. Mr. Rosenblatt is obviously equipped with a mighty coccyx.

Mr. Rosenblatt did not tell us how he feels about punctuality. Like Woody Allen, I myself would rather wait for the next screening than start a show after missing the first couple of minutes. Indeed, I imagine most ardent moviegoers require a full ten minutes of settling-in before the lights go down. This time is fruitfully used to arrange coats (a button in the wrong place can destroy an evening), comment unfavorably on the Muzak, point out men in leisure suits and white shoes, and eat a good part of the popcorn (a full box of popcorn in the dark is impossible: it is best to have the popcorn eaten to a level which can be negotiated solely by touch). The whole point of these preliminary rites, of course, is to warm up for the credit section of the movie. A movie fanatic loves nothing better than a 15-minute credit section; to miss even the shortest of credits is to miss at least 50 percent of the movie. And then the whole spiel must be repeated after the movie is over. At this point one associates the characters' names with the dimly remembered, old-time favorite, oh-god-yes-of-course-it-was-Herbert-Lom-he-looks-so-much-older hacks who played them.

Lastly, I wish it were possible to convert Mr. Rosenblatt from Reese's peanut butter cups to (what else?) peanut M-and-Ms. Having the virtue of numbers—there are always more—it is possible to eat these in a variety of ways,

to suit the given moment. They can be spaced out over the full two hours, sucked slowly, absorbed one by one; they can be gobbled eight at a time. Your peanut butter cup is hardly as versatile. It is pretty hefty to hang on to, you can't keep it in the bag once the bag is opened, it melts quickly, and it demands so much attention that it distracts from the screen. And that last, of course, is unforgivable.

Whitney Davis
London, Canada

Moon over Franklin

To the editors:

It was good that you appended to the poem "All Hallows" ("The Poetry of Louise Glück," *TNR*, June 17) a comment on its meaning—I wish that it had also been explained how, at the time of day when the hills darken, "the toothed moon rises." If, as I take it, "toothed" indicates the familiar convex-concave shape the moon appears to take at times—that time occurs for the rising moon only just before sun-up.

G.D. Jones
Franklin, North Carolina

The people rebel

To the editor:

Re Henry Fairlie's "The Unfiltered Voice" (*TNR*, June 24), I think it's time you gave poor Henry an extended vacation. His tendentious (but obviously angry) piece is a perfect example of the arrogant elitism which has given "the dangerous revival of the referendum" a mighty shove.

Voters are becoming increasingly aware that their views are, in fact, not being well represented by those elected to do so (campaign rhetoric notwithstanding). Rather, they are coming to perceive that they are being governed by blue noses, ideologues, and/or special interest/self-interest flunkies.

If Henry is as truly afraid of the voters and concerned about direct democracy as he appears to be, perhaps he could—while on vacation—put his considerable intellectual abilities to serious consideration of ways to make representative democracy more truly representative.

The referendum may be, as Henry says, "reactionary," but I submit that his ill-disguised snobbism is even more so!

C.H. Bay
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

I think your editorial "Me First" (*TNR* June 17) was wide of the mark. I don't think that greed explains why Proposition 13 passed by a 2-1 margin, nor does it explain why Proposition 8, the so-called responsible alternative to Jarvis-Gann, lost.

The reason that people voted for Proposition 13 is that property taxes have skyrocketed, causing some to lose their homes and many to feel that such a loss was imminent. You shouldn't have to go this far to prove that you are a good samaritan.

I contend that the crux of the situation is not that people are or have become greedy but that the legislature failed to do anything about a very real (scary and intimidating) problem. It should have taken welfare, old age assistance, and MediCal off the property tax and put them on the income tax, but it refused to budge. It refused to change the system. When it offered Proposition 8 as an alternative, it came too late and lacked credibility. We were told that Proposition 8 was the only responsible choice—hardly a cogent argument coming from a legislature that had been so complacent and irresponsible!

Eric Steel
Emeryville, California

To the editors:

Liberal hysteria over Proposition 13 was predictable. What was not expected was *TNR's* participation in this tantrum
(continued on page 39)

Japanese production costs lies in wages and other employee benefits. Hourly employment costs in the US industry are nearly double those in Japan, even though Japanese workers are just as productive as American workers. It's hard to escape the conclusion that American steelworkers simply are overpaid, even by US standards. Their wages average 60 percent higher than the mean for manufacturing as a whole. According to the Wage and Price Council, the contract negotiated last year will raise steelworker wages 30 percent by the end of 1980 (assuming a six percent annual inflation rate).

All the problems plaguing the American steel industry—high costs, an excessively powerful union, a reluctance to cut prices in response to slow demand—can be traced to its pampered status in the American economy. Once the unchallengeable leader in the world, it has grown flabby and complacent by being protected from strenuous competition. The import quotas imposed by President Nixon in 1969, far from reversing the decay of the industry's health, have accelerated it. Carter's reference price scheme will further aggravate these ailments, and make even stronger protectionist measures necessary. For its own long-term health and for the interest of American consumers, the industry should be required to compete fairly with its rivals abroad. Carter can open up the American steel trade to greater competition by simply lowering the reference prices to let in more imports—or, better yet, by scrapping the plan. He has the power. If the president is serious about inflation, he should use it.

Even in the new South, politics
is the same old circus.

After Eastland

Jackson, Mississippi

The last time that Mississippi sent a Republican to the US Senate was 1875 and the senator was a black named Blanche Kelso Bruce, who was picked by a state legislature packed with carpetbaggers. But this year the Republican National Committee has tagged Mississippi as a priority contest. That designation carries the promise of support to the federal maximum—about \$80,000 in cash and campaign services. Some national soothsayers already have installed the GOP nominee as front-runner in the Senate race. That nominee is US Representative Thad Cochran, 40, a product of modern Mississippi, handsome, urbane, well modulated in voice, manner and politics.

The occasion for Republican optimism is that Mississippi is in the process of picking a successor to James Oliver Eastland, and for the first time in 31 years a US Senate seat is actually open here. When Eastland first

came to Washington in 1941, the state's other senator was the renowned Theodore Bilbo, the fellow who proposed voluntary repatriation of American blacks—back to Africa. Four years later, Eastland was joined by a Kemper County judge named John Stennis, and there things have stood ever since. With the prospect of tenure like that, it's no surprise that when Eastland announced his retirement, the rites of succession attracted a crowd.

At the end of last year Eastland decided that he would seek a seventh term, even at age 73. The accumulated fruits of 36 years' seniority—president *pro tempore* of the Senate, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, ranking member of Agriculture, along with positions on the Democrats' policy and steering committees—convinced some Mississippians that their senior senator was indispensable, especially for a state that ranks 50th on just about every social and economic indicator.

Eastland's reelection campaign was plotted as a testament to the changing times. During the days of the civil rights movement, Eastland fashioned himself a bedrock segregationist, a pillar of the Citizens Council at home and in Washington a public servant who saw it as his patriotic duty to clog the passage of every civil rights bill that came through the Senate. Gearing up to redress that political image, Eastland began to court black leaders at home, hired his first black staffer ever and even talked of black and white bumper strips for the campaign. Mississippi was spared that mockery, for when it became clear that he was still in for a serious fight in the Democratic primary and a major Republican challenge, Eastland dropped out.

Republican prospects this year are also enhanced by the probable presence of two independent black candidates on the general election ballot: Henry Kirksey, who won statewide attention by running a one-man, one-vote campaign, and Charles Evers, brother of the murdered civil rights leader Medgar Evers. If he stays in, Evers will be a serious factor in the outcome. There are 300,000 registered black voters in Mississippi, representing a third of the state's electorate. In presidential elections, they are solidly Democratic: Jimmy Carter got well over 90 percent, for example, and Hubert Humphrey and George McGovern got about the same. But black voters have come to recognize that they sometimes can carry more weight in general elections if they use independent candidacies as a fulcrum of influence. Thad Cochran originally was elected with 48 percent of the vote in 1972, for example, while Richard Nixon polled 76 percent in his district. Cochran was helped by the presence on the ballot of an independent black candidate who drew away the margin of difference, eight percent of the vote, presumed by most to be otherwise Democratic. Mississippi Democrats argue that such efforts merely cast blacks in the role of spoiler. The consequence was that Cochran quickly made his fourth district a safe seat for the GOP with

reelection totals ranging up to 78 percent.

Evers himself was an independent candidate for governor in 1971, and drew 172,000 votes. This year Mississippi Democrats hope the black vote has matured, as they put it, and will be inclined to make a pragmatic choice rather than casting a racially motivated token vote for either Evers or Kirksey. Their message, in other words, is that Evers can't win but he might assure the election of a conservative Republican over their own nominee, a pretty conservative Democrat by most standards, named Maurice Dantin.

Dantin, 49, is a reserve military officer who takes his recreation by running in the Marine Corps marathon. He has been a district attorney and mayor of Columbia, Mississippi (pop. 7117). Dantin has one statewide race under his belt, for governor in 1971, when he finished out of the money. This time, though he was never officially anointed and there were outcroppings of support for other candidates, Dantin inherited most of what is loosely termed "the Eastland organization." Real political machines are kept in tune by elections, and Big Jim Eastland has not been in a serious contest since 1954; nevertheless, Dantin's handlers include several prominent Eastland advisers and campaign strategists, including the senator's own manager-designee, Wayne Edwards. Dantin also won the early support of organized labor, not usually thought to be a major force in Mississippi politics, but obviously helpful in a crowded primary field.

To win the Democratic nomination, Dantin survived Mississippi's traditional two-tiered primary. Though television has toned things down some, the first primary in the Deep South is still the best spectator sport in American politics. The field is full, the gloves are off and the event is not affected by any necessity to cast a pragmatic vote. Assured of a run-off a few weeks hence, voters are free to back their first choice, however outlandish his claims or slim his chances. Then, too, the political oddsmakers are always a bit off base, so you can never tell which longshot will be the surprise of the first go-round and in a position to throw his support to one of the two leaders in the second primary in return for a "consideration."

On the Democratic side, this year's first primary was a free-swinging seven-way affair featuring attractions such as Sonny Tedford, whose gimmick to gain attention was a 2400-mile tractor ride around the state. Among the four candidates with a real chance to make the runoff, the instant front-runner was incumbent Governor Cliff Finch, 50, who won election in 1975 with a populist, man-of-the-people campaign that got the support of both poor whites and poor blacks. In office, Finch has tried to cement this "redneck-black-neck" alliance by appointing a record number of blacks to state boards and commissions, albeit mostly in powerless, token slots. At the same time, he's brought in more than an equal ration of his own cronies, including Klansmen and other varieties of recognizable

segregationists. In the campaign, Finch toured the boondocks kissing women of both races and railing against the big interests, while in the meantime the lawyers, bankers and businessmen fattened up his campaign kitty as they can be counted on to do for an incumbent governor in Mississippi. On the stump, he was Mr. Malaprop, talking about being "pacific" on the issues, traveling "incarnito" and once introduced soul music star Ray Charles as Charles Ray. Nevertheless, he was conceded the top spot in the first primary and local prognosticators could not see how he'd fall below 40 percent.

Another seeded contender was Finch's predecessor as governor, William Waller, who had the usual problem of an out-of-office politician in putting together a campaign—plenty of recognition but no current organization. Waller did his best to convince people it was only a two-man race by campaigning exclusively against Finch. On the day before the primary he embarked on an airport tour around the state charging that Finch was misusing the Mississippi governor's mansion for campaign purposes and promising to back federal legislation to prevent any sitting governor from running for another office. Waller's television ads combined a sort of pie-in-the-sky populism with a standard Deep South pitch against the Feds. "Every Mississippian who owns an acre of land might be sitting on an oil or gas field," he told the voters, "but they'll never know it until the federal government gets out of the energy business." As the man who first brought blacks into state government, Waller was considered Finch's main competitor for black support.

Former lieutenant governor Charles Sullivan, 53, the most conservative choice in the top four, let his estimate of President Carter's current popularity be known in his announcement statement: he'd voted for Ford, Sullivan said. Sullivan ran his campaign straight out of the Reagan-Helms speechbook, inveighing against the growing Soviet threat and Carter's decisions on the B-1, neutron bomb and Panama Canal. "I am one American who loves the military, and it's going to pot," he said. Defeated in three previous attempts to be governor, Sullivan was a man without a base. His only hope was that his position on national issues was most in tune with the mood in Mississippi.

And finally there was Maurice Dantin, who emerged as the most moderate talker in the field—as conservative as anyone on military and fiscal issues, but a bit more progressive on jobs and tax reform. Edwards, Dantin's manager, contends that there was really no difference among the candidates on issues and issues would make no difference in the voting anyway. "It's all a matter of style," he said.

As it turned out, Dantin was the surprise of the first primary, edging Finch 29 percent to 28 percent, with Sullivan and Waller in line behind. Both Finch and Waller were inclined to blame their poor fortunes on a

voter turnout much lower than expected, especially among blacks. At a statewide campaign meeting for Finch the morning after the first primary, former Ole Miss all-American quarterback Eagle Day led a prayer asking for "strength to analyze the situation with clearness of mind." But a close Eastland associate analyzed the results bluntly: "In Mississippi, when one candidate does much better than expected and another does much worse than expected and they wind up together in the runoff, there's nothing more for anybody to do—the race is already over."

Cliff Finch campaigned in the runoff just as if he believed that logic. Attempting to recoup in the three weeks between the primaries, he tried to gin up some fervor among the little people with a series of hard-hitting television commercials picturing a cigar and a bottle of Scotch (allusions to Eastland), with the accompanying message that the old political bosses, including some with only a few months left in Washington, had gotten together to stop Cliff Finch. The predictable result was that Dantin inherited even more Eastland support as well as substantial parts of the Sullivan and Waller campaigns, and won the runoff easily.

How much difference there really is between Dantin, who has no record on national issues, and Cochran, who has an ADA voting record that hovers around five percent, remains to be seen. For some, the presumption of difference is a leap of faith. The state AFL-CIO backed Dantin from the start, for example, despite his outspoken opposition to labor law reform and the repeal of right-to-work laws. "Frankly, we're going to have to nail him down in a couple areas before we roll up our sleeves in the fall," says the president of the state AFL-CIO, Claude Ramsey. "And let's face it, Dantin's going to need all the help he can get," he adds.

Ramsey's right. Mississippi Republicans offer some persuasive mathematics for November. In 1976, Jimmy Carter had everything possible going for him: he was a southern Baptist, the governor of a neighboring state, had the wholehearted support of Finch, Eastland, Stennis and George Wallace and a solid black vote. Still he barely carried the state (51-to-49 percent) and lost the Mississippi white vote to Ford, three-to-two. This time the Republicans are completely unified and the Democrats are not. Thad Cochran easily defeated his Republican primary opponent, State Senator Charles Pickering, in a spirited but gentlemanly contest, and quickly folded Pickering's supporters into his own general election campaign.

As long as Charles Evers remains a serious candidate, Cochran is the favorite in Mississippi. For a time, some Democrats here professed the belief that the completely unpredictable Evers was not really a serious candidate, that he would only stay in to block Finch, whom he despises, but that any other Democratic nominee could persuade him to drop out—for a consideration. On the other hand, it was also assumed that

since every vote Evers gets comes out of Dantin's column, Republicans have a strong interest in keeping the Evers operation rolling. At this time, Evers professes every intention to stay the course. He has officially filed for a spot on the ballot and he recently signed up Natchez oil millionaire D.A. Biglane as his chief fundraiser. Biglane is an Eastland pal of long standing who lives in Cochran's congressional district. Evers's candidacy strikes at a weakness of Dantin. Even though he was the only leading Democratic candidate with no history of ties to the Citizens Council, Dantin did only moderately well among blacks in both primaries.

Republicans also have the idea that President Carter may be a factor in the outcome of the contest to pick Eastland's successor, that Mississippi voters may be in an off-year mood. In the primary, Thad Cochran urged voters to cast a protest ballot against the administration, and Maurice Dantin now turns aside questions about whether he'll invite the president in to campaign for him by saying that he doubts that any endorsements do any good. Republicans won't press their advantage in personal terms—after all, Jimmy Carter is still a native son in the South. "We'll call it 'experience,'" says one GOP strategist. "Cochran has been doing the same job in Washington for six years, only in a different office building. We'll just help the people down here remember the last time they voted for a guy who had no experience."

Ken Bode

Podhoretz says, "The second thing we need is a presidential candidate."

The Moynihan Movement

Daniel Patrick Moynihan denies he is running for president. His press secretary insists Moynihan *won't* run for president. Moynihan's friends, political and intellectual, say they can't get him to seriously consider the prospect. The Gallup and Harris polls are not even listing Moynihan among President Carter's potential 1980 rivals. But things are moving and they have been for some time. Maybe not organizational things yet, but people are talking and beginning to write. Mentioners are mentioning Moynihan. If there is not yet a Moynihan campaign, there is a Moynihan movement and a Moynihan logic. Moynihan's friends all sense it. So does the White House, though political aides there are reluctant to talk about the political

future of New York's Democratic senator.

Personally, I think it would be a disaster if Moynihan ever were elected president. He probably would cut off the United States from the whole third world. He very probably would launch a cold war with the Soviet Union. His impetuosity might lead to a Vietnam in Africa and his ideology might cause World War III over the Middle East. And yet, he has charm, brains and Irish dazzle. He has brilliant, articulate, persuasive and powerful supporters. And the political pendulum is swinging his way. President Carter is vulnerable and the country is heading right. Ronald Reagan is the Republican front-runner. Who will capture the spirit among the Democrats? Henry Jackson has proven too dull. Teddy Kennedy is too left, and Jerry Brown is out of this world. Moynihan is a natural.

Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, understands all this, and he is pushing. On the op-ed page of *The New York Times* July 9, he accused President Carter of being "irresolute" about whether the United States should wage a "struggle against Soviet imperialism" as polls indicate the public wants to do, or to hang in with detente as the "foreign policy establishment" wants.

"If Mr. Carter were a true leader," Podhoretz wrote, he would be trying to resolve the conflict. But instead he is "the perfect embodiment of the stalemate." Now, "the record low ratings he has been scoring in the polls for his handling of foreign affairs indicate that the American people are not content to go on living in so stagnant and irresolute a state. This means that the Carter administration may very well fall in 1980, possibly to a challenge from within the Democratic party, possibly to a Republican opponent . . ."

This was no mere analysis on Podhoretz's part. On June 22, at a foreign policy symposium convened by the Coalition for a Democratic Majority—a "centrist Democrat" group of which Moynihan and Jackson are honorary co-chairmen—Podhoretz concluded an assault on administration positions and an appeal for ideological action by declaring: "The second thing we need is a presidential candidate. We need candidates who can help to mobilize the sentiment that is stirring in this country.

"Without the kind of political standard that such a candidate would raise, the argument turns abstract and academic. We need to think very seriously about a possible challenge, if that would seem necessary, to our own party in 1980. We have to think seriously about the strategy by which such a candidacy could be mounted and the way in which it could be used, not only to mobilize, but to refine and make more coherent the new sense of reality that's astir in the country."

When asked on the telephone last week whether his friend Moynihan was the candidate he had in mind, Podhoretz replied, "Yeah, sure." He hastened to add—believably—that he was speaking only for himself, that

Moynihan was discouraging presidential talk and that Moynihan did not know of or approve what he, Podhoretz, was saying. But, Podhoretz continued, "I think the political mood of the country, the political culture, is moving in a direction that is very congenial to a candidate with the views Moynihan holds. As I've said in private conversation, if I had to invent a candidate to suit the political mood of the country, it would be somebody like Moynihan."

According to Podhoretz, survey data, scattered election results and the "smell" of things indicate that the people want the United States "to play the role of leader of what Pat in the UN used to call the 'liberty party' in the world, and to do what is necessary internally to play that role." That is, "The country has to come out of its period of self-denigration, self-hatred, depression. I think we are getting out. I see this administration as a reflection of uncertainty about what to do . . . a continuation of the interregnum between the Vietnam-Watergate period and the future, which could be one of restored confidence in American political culture and ability to assert itself in international affairs."

Norman Podhoretz could be discounted, perhaps, as just the editor of the American Jewish Committee's Manhattan-based monthly, circulation 52,000. What does he know or represent? Well, he is an uncommonly shrewd and passionate man, for one thing; dedicated, articulate and deep. What he thinks gets reproduced far beyond his own magazine. Some of his ideological allies compare Podhoretz in this pre-1980 period to Allard K. Lowenstein, who organized the movement to unseat Lyndon Johnson in 1968. By analogy, of course, Moynihan would be the Eugene McCarthy of the post-post-Vietnam era. But there is some reason to think that Moynihan could not just oust the incumbent, but win. For Norman Podhoretz is not alone in the Moynihan movement. If he ran, Moynihan could expect to attract heavy support from organized labor, the American Jewish community, urban white ethnic voters, Roman Catholics and white southerners turned off by Carter.

In parallel to 1968, it could happen that Moynihan would knock off Carter, only to be moved in upon by Edward Kennedy, following in the pattern of his brother Robert. Possibly lots of Democrats could be persuaded, as in 1968, that the Kennedy was more solid than the semi-mystic Irishman in the race. But Moynihan has a far broader potential base of support than McCarthy did.

And also, Moynihan has tougher, more experienced political people around him. There is George Meany, for one, and there are also the labor types on the board of the Committee for a Democratic Majority: Sol Chaikin of the International Ladies Garment Workers, Albert Shanker of the AFT and Martin Ward, president of the plumbers union. Even though the CDM does not endorse candidates, its board suggests the sort of

people who would be available to a Moynihan candidacy. Besides the unionists, they include friendly intellectuals such as Midge Decter, Podhoretz's wife, professors John P. Roche, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Eugene Rostow and Seymour Martin Lipset; civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, and former admiral Elmo Zumwalt.

What does one call this collection of people? Their enemies consider them reactionaries. Lots of people call them "neoconservative." One of them said he considers himself a "Harry Truman liberal, a New Deal liberal, a George Meany liberal." The CDM calls itself "centrist." Podhoretz says he isn't really happy with any of the labels. "I hoped we could define the term 'Moynihan Democrat,'" he said. It is worth a try.

Moynihan's movement does have—in contrast to McCarthy's—a distinct world view, an ideology that has been brilliantly popularized on public television in a two-year series, just concluding, called "In Search of the Real America: A Challenge to the Chorus of Failure and Guilt" and featuring Ben J. Wattenberg, the CDM's chairman and a former political adviser to Henry Jackson. Wattenberg is also a fellow of the American Enterprise Institute, which also provides pay and work space to several other CDM associates. AEI, a Washington think tank, was once thought of as an exclusively Republican government-in-exile, mainly because it hired up many old Ford administration officials. But it seems to be placing bets on the Democratic right as well. It has just begun publishing a magazine called *Public Opinion*, with Wattenberg and Lipset as co-editors and former Ford White House aide David Gergen as managing editor. In its second issue, the magazine featured a widely-noticed discussion between Moynihan and Henry Kissinger, in which the two former Harvard professors agreeably denounced the American elite's failure of nerve in the face of international Communism. By implication, they were bashing Kissinger's lately-forgotten policy of detente.

There is far more to the Moynihan message than anti-communism. It goes, to oversimplify it radically: All the bad talk you've heard about America is bunk. There is no population explosion. There'll always be enough of everything for everybody. We're not running out of natural resources. Technology will take care of us. More is better and growth is good. So are capitalism and consumption. The air and water have never been cleaner. Blacks and women have never had it so good and they'll have it better yet tomorrow, without quotas. Yes, we make mistakes (specifics unmentioned), but all-in-all we're terrific, the best country in the world, the best country there has ever been . . . richer, freer, more generous than anywhere, anytime. *But*, we are under threat. The Soviet Union, the worst despotism ever to exist on the face of the earth, is out to undo us. We are being challenged all over the globe, and Russia will win unless we mobilize ourselves, stand up and resist. And we would stand up,

except for those who are dragging us down: environmentalists, activists, women's libbers, the peace movement, Nader consumerists, "elites" and—worst of all—McGovernites.

While it appears to the rest of the world that McGovern's disastrous 1972 defeat spelled the end of "McGovernism," Wattenberg and Podhoretz argue that this odious doctrine actually won when Jimmy Carter came to power. The second echelon of Carter's administration, according to their argument, is populated by exactly the people McGovern would have hired, and they are making policy for the country: anti-growth policy on the domestic side and pussyfoot policy in the face of international Communism. As Kissinger put it in his conversation with Moynihan, these officials believe that as a result of Vietnam, "If America is not to be punished for its presumption, then at least we must be sure that the country is never presumptuous to undertake any more distant enterprises." According to Moynihan's allies, this attitude accounts for Carter policies such as the waffling on human rights, the failure to "counter the Soviet threat" in Africa, the withdrawal of US troops from Korea and decisions against weapons like the B-1 bomber and the neutron bomb. The Moynihan coalition doesn't much like Carter's strategic arms negotiating proposals, either, and thinks the US is putting pressure on Israel to make dangerous concessions to the Arabs.

The Moynihan message, in short, is that America's great, but it lacks guts. It's an appealing message, politically, and it isn't all wrong. Vietnam and the Nixon era clearly did lead many American liberals to exaggerate American failings into total iniquity. There has been a neurotic tendency, after Vietnam, for the United States to shy away from international involvements that might lead to trouble. Carter is confused about how to handle the Soviet Union. But the question is, what should we *do*?

Here, the Moynihan coalition's answers either are not clear or sound downright risky. It favors a strong propaganda offensive against human rights violations by the Soviet Union, which is well and good, but that is what Carter favored, too, until he discovered that the Soviets regarded the offensive as a serious intrusion on their internal affairs, one they were willing to resist with maximum pettiness and brutality. Moynihan Democrats presumably would push back as hard as possible, breaking off trade, cultural and other US-Soviet connections. Many of them also are against the administration's SALT agreement, or almost any agreement that the Soviets would agree to.

A Moynihan administration almost certainly would involve the US in a cold war, possibly figuring that superior US economic strength, properly mobilized, could restore US military superiority or force the Soviets to bargain on our terms. In the Middle East, its inclination would be to support the Israeli government unswervingly, even at the cost of good relations with

the Arabs and the risk of a big-power confrontation in a new Mideast war.

Concerning Africa, the Moynihan coalition is unsure where and how to act, but its members seem determined to act *somewhere*. Most seem to favor aid, covert or overt, to anti-Communist forces in Angola. That is an easy enough policy, except that it seems to provoke guerrilla attacks from Angola into Zaire, to which an American administration would have to decide how to respond. But the real question is what to do about Rhodesia. Here the Moynihan coalition seems to lean toward support for the black-white internal settlement, which seems equitable to many Americans but which is unanimously opposed as unfair by the leaders of neighboring black African states. If bloody, brutal all-out civil war breaks out in Rhodesia, especially with Cubans involved and white corpses appearing nightly on American TV, what will the US do?

Within the Moynihan coalition, there are some, Podhoretz included, who opposed the Vietnam war—not ideologically, but as “the wrong war, in the wrong place at the wrong time.” Podhoretz said, “I am well aware, because of Vietnam, that there is a danger of indiscriminate action. But, I think the lesson of Vietnam is, don’t get involved indiscriminately. To others, the lesson is, don’t do it at all.” He is exactly right, but the question that will have to be raised with Moynihan, if he does run, is whether he is discriminating enough to know a worthwhile, winnable military involvement from one that is merely ideologically appealing. I think the Moynihan crowd is overreacting to the post-Vietnam overreaction. They seem willing to do anything to prove we have guts. I think this group deserves an articulate champion in the Senate, and I hope Moynihan will stay there for a long time.

Morton Kondracke

White House Watch

Open Season

“Well,” Jimmy Carter said in a tone of mild complaint on June 26, “it’s open season on me or officials in the government.” He’d been asked at a press conference whether he had meant in an earlier statement to imply that American Jews were unfairly blaming his foreign affairs adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, for policy decisions that they believed to be against the interests of Israel. The President was asked in the same question whether there ought to be limits “on the criticism of officials like Mr. Brzezinski involved in the making of

foreign policy.” Without denying that he had indeed had Jewish critics in mind, the President at the press conference mentioned only Leonid Brezhnev and Fidel Castro and said their criticism of Brzezinski is “not fair to him.” It became clear, however, that the unfairness that galled Jimmy Carter was what he considered to be the unfairness to *him*. “I think it’s easy,” he said, “for someone who disagrees with a decision that I make to single out Dr. Brzezinski as a target, insinuating that I’m either ineffective or incompetent or ignorant, that I don’t actually make the decisions, but that my subordinates make them for me. And it gives an easy target for them without attacking the President of the United States. . . . And it takes away from the fact that in this country I’m the President, I make the decisions, and I want to be responsible for those decisions once they are made.”

This was one of several exchanges with reporters and others in which Carter disclosed more about his personal condition and mood than he usually does. He told editors visiting him at the White House that he welcomes “the sense that the American people have that the President does get tired, that I need just as much recreation now—fishing, playing tennis, walking alone in the woods, being with my family—as I did when I was a farmer.” At a question-answer session with Texas biggies in Fort Worth, he said something about himself and his conception of the presidency that took on special interest as he prepared for his second economic summit conference with six other chiefs of state and government in West Germany. “I represent what our nation is to other people around the world,” he said. “And it grieves me at times not to be able to put forward a demonstration of accomplishment, a willingness for us to deal with those crucial questions that are of importance to us all.”

The President was just beginning to realize by then, three weeks before he went to Bonn, that he was likely to be grieved and embarrassed at his meetings on July 16 and 17 with his counterparts from Canada, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy and Japan. Even in late June, American foreign and economic policy officials were still assuming that Carter would have two strong cards to play at a conference where every participant wanted something from the others and had to be able to offer the others something in return. And all, of course, ostensibly not in the selfish interest of any one of the seven countries but in the common interest of furthering world economic stability or at least averting worldwide economic recession. Carter’s first card was to be a preliminary agreement engineered by his chief trade negotiator, Robert Strauss, on the essentials of revised multinational trading terms. The second card was to be Carter’s absolute assurance that he could and would move to reduce US oil imports and with them the US trade and payments deficit that the summit host, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, called in a newspaper interview on July 11 “the most important

single source of the upheaval in the world-wide network of balances of trade and payments."

In the last week of June and the first fortnight of July, the assumptions underlying official American hopes that the summit conference could be made to seem a success in general and a success for Carter in particular collapsed with startling speed. Strauss publicly abandoned any hope of attaining in time for the conference the guarantees of increased access for American farm exports to European and Japanese markets that Congress would certainly demand before it accepted a revised multinational agreement on trade and tariffs. The same Congress, having refused since April 1977 to enact the energy legislation that would enable Carter to promise the results that Schmidt and the other summit conferees expected from him, came close to revoking his authority to do the little by executive action that he might do to accomplish the same results.

The consequences in the US and abroad were saddening for Carter and his people. They had been counting on a success at Bonn, in appearance and maybe in reality, to arrest the steady decline in his standing and in his reputation for effective leadership at home. Japan's minister of economics said scornfully and unfairly that poor Mr. Carter—the minister didn't quite use those words but he meant them—was coming to Bonn seeking everything and offering nothing. Even Schmidt, probably closest of the conferring chiefs to Carter in basic economic principles, was demanding on the summit eve that Carter guarantee what he manifestly could not guarantee in reduction of the US trading and payments deficit. Carter's spokesmen suddenly shifted from promises of real accomplishment or at least of presidential guarantees to accomplish worthwhile things to assurances that the President will assert his determination to accomplish worthwhile things, notably among them a reduction of US oil imports and consumption. Before every one of these summit meetings, beginning with the first of them in France in 1975, the world has been told that they are occasions more for discussion and the sharing of views than for concrete decisions and agreements. That has been truer on some occasions than on others. It's truer now than it's ever been before and depressingly truer than it was at Jimmy Carter's first summit conference in London last year. It was especially depressing to hear Carter spokesmen and policy-level officials saying before they flew with him to Bonn that other leaders and other governments haven't accomplished everything that they promised to accomplish at previous summits, either. It is undoubtedly true, but it's not very nice to hear, that for domestic political reasons very like those that restrict Carter, the President of the United States won't be the only conferee unable to promise all that the others demand and expect.

John Osborne

Could Harvard itself pass the Harvard test?

Powell's Beau Idéal

Sometimes Supreme Court decisions are more important for what they could have done but did not do than for what they actually did. *Bakke* is such a case. Many briefs urged the justices to legitimate racial quotas. Other briefs urged them to strike down all affirmative action programs. Either extreme would have produced a divisive disaster for America. The Court collectively—though not all of the justices individually—steered a middle course, leaving much to be decided in future litigation. The Supreme Court does not even have to decide the sticky issues that are likely to be generated by its plethora of ambiguous phrases and footnotes. Among the most important powers possessed by the Supreme Court is the power to decide not to decide. By the exercise of its discretion not to review the decision of lower courts, the Supreme Court can allow these lower courts, both state and federal, to muddle through with inconsistent decisions until the justices deem the time ripe for yet another foray into the admissions thicket.

Even though the words of the justices' opinions may not contain any more inherent wisdom than the millions of other words written about affirmative action, they will have a significant impact on university admissions. These words will be even more important if other guidance is not forthcoming from the Supreme Court. But it would be a tragedy if the important debate over the role of race-specified affirmative action programs were now deflected into a Talmudic study of the nuances in the *Bakke* opinion. As one of the wisest Supreme Court justices once quipped about the Court: "We are not final because we are infallible; but we are infallible only because we are final."

In *Bakke* a five-man majority held—with a morass of rhetoric, citations, footnotes and dicta; and for a variety of irreconcilable reasons—that the type of admissions program used by Davis Medical School does not pass constitutional and/or statutory muster, while the type used by Harvard College does. Justice Powell, whose opinion contained the judgment of the Court, expressly singled out Harvard College for approval. He quoted extensively from the description of the Harvard program contained in the *amicus curiae* brief submitted by Harvard, Columbia, Stanford and Pennsylvania universities. Powell apparently found it easier to point to an existing system than to define the factors that would satisfy the constitutional and statutory standard. (Mr. Justice Stewart once similarly said he could not define the factors that make for a pornographic movie, "but I know it when I see it.")

It is unfortunate that Powell chose Harvard College. Harvard is the wealthiest school in the world, with an international applicant pool that is like an ocean

compared to the fish tanks from which many other schools must select their students. Moreover, Powell's use of an undergraduate liberal arts college as a model for medical school admissions reflects a degree of educational inexperience that demonstrates the wisdom of keeping judges as uninvolved as possible in university admissions programs.

But Justice Powell had a good reason for pointing to the Harvard undergraduate admissions program: it is so vague and discretionary as to defy description. It reposes all decision making with a group of Platonic guardians whose task is to shape an entering class so as to maximize its diversity in certain unspecified ways. A Harvard admissions officer may be unable to define the factors that make a good candidate for admission, but is supposed to know a Harvard man (or, more recently, woman) when he sees one.

The *Bakke* decision thus is a triumph of ambiguity and discretion over clarity and candor—a direction in which the Supreme Court has been moving on several fronts over the past decade. Powell condemns Davis Medical School for reserving a discrete number of places in each class for disadvantaged members of specified minority groups; while he applauds Harvard College for employing a process that eschews “target-quotas for the number of blacks” but allows “the race of an applicant [to] tip the balance in his favor just as geographic origin or a life spent on a farm tip the balance in other candidates’ cases.”

At bottom, Powell's opinion really says nothing at all about affirmative action as such. It simply delegates to universities the discretionary power to decide on the degree and definition of the diversity—including or excluding racial factors—that they feel enhance the educational experiences of their students.

The Harvard College description, as quoted in the Powell opinion, tells far from the whole story of Harvard's quest for diversity. It fails to disclose the enormous efforts that Harvard College undertakes simultaneously to assure a certain kind of uniformity in its student body over time. Harvard (like many other Ivy League colleges) always has given great weight to genealogy—whether the applicant's parents or other family members attended or taught at Harvard. Since Harvard's past student and faculty bodies were anything but diverse, this “grandfather policy” guarantees a good deal of homogeneity over the generations of Harvard College classes, as well as homogeneity in a large part of any given class.

Mr. Justice Blackmun doubted whether there was much difference between the Davis and Harvard programs, commenting that the “cynical” may say that

“under a program such as Harvard's one may accomplish covertly what Davis concedes it does openly.” Justice Powell nowhere disputes this. His answer seems to be that even if both programs produce the same result, the Davis program—because of its explicit acknowledgment of racial quotas—“will be viewed as inherently unfair by the public generally as well as by applicants for admissions. . . ,” whereas the Harvard program—with its vague consideration of many unquantified factors—will not be as grating to the public or to its unsuccessful applicants.

But there is one way in which the Harvard system is ultimately less fair than the Davis one. In order to receive special consideration under the discredited Davis program, an applicant had to be *both* individually disadvantaged *and* a member of a specified racial minority. Under the approved Harvard program, the applicant's race alone “may tip the balance” in his favor even if he is the scion of a wealthy and powerful family who attended the best schools and personally experienced almost none of the trauma of racial discrimination. (Indeed, I was recently told about a case where one student sought a double preference: as a disadvantaged black and as an advantaged offspring of a Harvard alumnus.) Harvard's program has the effect of preferring the wealthy and advantaged black applicant, for example, over the poor and disadvantaged black or white applicant. In practice, Harvard probably makes more turn on race alone than did Davis. But it does it with typical Harvard class: low-keyed, muted, and without displaying too much exposed skin. Moreover, the history of Harvard's use of “geographic distribution” as a subterfuge for religious quotas leaves lingering doubts about the bona fides of its alleged quest for diversity.

But I suspect that Harvard will now be forced to expose more of its skin—blemishes and all—than it may feel comfortable doing. When Harvard submitted a brief inviting the Supreme Court to select its undergraduate admissions program as a paradigm of constitutionality, it accepted a moral—and perhaps even legal—responsibility to be candid with the public about how its program operates in practice. Many of the critical questions left open by the Supreme Court in its collection of opinions may now be directed to Harvard's admissions officers by other universities seeking assurances that their programs will not be vulnerable to *Bakke*-type lawsuits. Harvard has thus cast itself in the role of a mini-Supreme Court of university admissions.

It will be interesting to see whether the courts, in looking to the Harvard model for constitutional and statutory guidance, will limit themselves to the Harvard College admissions program as described by Justice Powell, or whether they will go beneath the placid surface and probe the more complex and troubling realities of the Harvard College program as it

Coming:
Stanley Hoffmann on
Carter's Soviet Problem.

surely must operate in practice. (I have no inside knowledge of how the Harvard College admissions process actually works; my speculations derive from reading the newspapers and from having publicly debated several Harvard officials on the *Bakke* issue.)

For example, Justice Powell is anything but clear about the degree to which an applicant's race may be considered in university admissions decisions. At different points in his opinion, he articulates different formulations of the limits on explicit consideration of race in attempts to produce a diverse student body. He says that race must be "simply one element—to be weighed fairly against other elements—in the selection process"; that a school must place "all pertinent elements of diversity . . . on the same footing for consideration, although not necessarily according them the same weight"; and that a school must "adhere to a policy of individual comparisons."

Let us assume that Blank University seeks diversity by trying to include musicians, farm boys, Oklahomans among its entering class, but that it does not instruct its admissions officers to aim for a specified minimum number of musicians, farm boys and Oklahomans in each entering class. May Blank University direct its admissions officers—either explicitly or implicitly—to make certain that the number of blacks or Chicanos should not go beneath a certain approximate percentage in the class? Would that put race on a different "footing" than the other elements of diversity?

The answer to that question may well turn on whether one looks for legal guidance to the description of the Harvard program as quoted in Mr. Justice Powell's opinion, or to the real world operation of the Harvard program as it probably works in practice. The following description certainly implies that race is not treated differently from other elements of diversity:

"In Harvard College admissions the Committee has not set target-quotas for the number of blacks, or of musicians, football players, physicists or Californians to be admitted in a given year. At the same time the Committee is aware that if Harvard College is to provide a truly heterogeneous environment that reflects the rich diversity of the United States, it cannot be provided without some attention to numbers. It would not make sense, for example, to have 10 or 20 students out of 1,100 whose homes are west of the Mississippi. Comparably, 10 to 20 black students could not begin to bring to their classmates and to each other the variety of points of view, backgrounds and experiences of blacks in the United States. Their small numbers might also create a sense of isolation among the black students themselves and thus make it more difficult for them to develop and achieve their potential. Consequently, when making its decisions, the Committee on Admissions is aware that there is some relationship between numbers and achieving the benefits to be derived from a diverse student body, and between numbers and providing a reasonable environ-

ment for those students admitted. But that awareness does not mean that the Committee sets a minimum number of blacks or of people from west of the Mississippi who are to be admitted. It means only that in choosing among thousands of applicants who are not only "admissible" academically but have other strong qualities, the Committee, with a number of criteria in mind, pays some attention to distribution among many types and categories of students."

A closer look at the admissions program in practice might well reveal that the Harvard admissions officers, though interested in assuring geographic, occupational and musical diversity, really pay little or no attention to numbers: it would be no great crisis if one particular entering class at Harvard College had few or even no violinists, Oklahomans, or farm boys. (Football quarterbacks might be another thing altogether.) But these very same admissions officers may well be under instructions—explicit or implicit—to pay close attention to the number of blacks so as to assure that the proportion does not fall below a certain approximate floor. If a judge were thus to look to Powell's model, he might very well rule that Blank University's program was illegal. On the other hand, if he were to look to the Harvard program in practice, he might well conclude that Blank's program was really no different than Harvard's.

Mr. Justice Powell also is unclear about whether a university's initial process for screening out applicants must be color blind. Many universities, particularly professional schools, have a procedure under which non-minority applicants whose combined grade scores do not reach a specified total are placed into an automatic or presumptive "reject" category, while minority candidates are not placed into such categories unless their combined grade scores are considerably lower. There is a serious question whether such a double track screening procedure, or any of its many subtle variants, complies with Mr. Justice Powell's requirement that all institutions must "adhere to a policy of individual comparison." The Harvard description says that:

"When the Committee on Admissions reviews the large middle group of applicants who are "admissible" and deemed capable of doing good work in their courses, the race of an applicant may tip the balance in his favor just as geographic origin or a life spent on a farm may tip the balance in other candidates' cases."

This certainly implies that race is not considered in the initial screening decision. But a closer look at the program in practice may disclose that there is no initial color-blind screening for admissibility, and that even initial criteria for qualifications may depend—at least to some degree—on an applicant's race. If Blank University adopted an admissions procedure that initially screened applicants differently on the basis of race, a court might again have to decide whether to look to the Harvard model or to the Harvard reality.

It would be the crowning irony if a *Bakke* type lawsuit were brought against Harvard College itself, and if the Court were to evaluate the Harvard admissions program as practiced against the model Harvard program as described in the *Powell* opinion. Harvard College might well flunk its own test.

Alan Dershowitz

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Thoughts after seeing
Vanessa Redgrave's 'The Palestinian.'

Redwashing Terrorism

An effective bit in *The Palestinian*, Vanessa Redgrave's film about the PLO, is the scene in which she dances her equivalent of the carmagnole made notable in the French Revolution. With gun lifted erect or cradled horizontally, she gyrates gracefully inside the circle of her PLO admirers. Lithe, pretty, she gives the weapon she brandishes its full significance. It will be used and the dancer invites its use.

I went to see the film on the third night of its showing in Beverly Hills. Though the theater had been bombed at 4 a.m. on the day of the opening, the only visible damage was one boarded window. There were no demonstrators or those whom Miss Redgrave called "Zionist hoodlums" on the sidewalk; the Jewish Defense League, which had paraded against an award for the actress, perhaps had realized that their tactics were counterproductive. Nevertheless my handbag was searched as I went in: the first time this has happened to me at a movie since I went to a theater in Jerusalem. The audience was sparse, mostly Arab. I was probably one of the very few "Zionists" present. As the showing was sponsored by the Workers League there was a large display of Trotskyite literature in the lobby. The youth in charge explained that his organization was engaged in exposing "Zionist lies," and a pamphlet proudly announced that "Comrade Redgrave is a member of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party, British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, with which the Workers League is in political solidarity."

Curiously enough, in view of its objective, the film devoted considerable time to an account of the siege of Tal Zaatar, the refugee camp and PLO stronghold which held out for nearly two months during the Lebanese civil war. By the time the Lebanese Christians conquered this camp of 30,000 the death toll was high. A personable doctor who directed the camp hospital gave a moving account of the suffering of the defenders. Survivors of the battles contributed their

tales. One old Arab chanted a newly fashioned epic of Tel Zaatar: "On this day the bombs came, on this day. . . ." It was evident that Tel Zaatar had entered into Arab folklore as a tale of exemplary valor. Miss Redgrave, who conducted the interviews, regrettably distracted the viewer by periodic close-ups of her blazing blue eyes and undeniably lovely face, which registered a monotonous intensity of emotion guaranteed to lose an Oscar.

A recurrent theme in the story was the lack of water during the final two weeks. Women ran to get water under shell-fire; children perished from dehydration. "A second Leningrad," said one narrator. I thought of another comparison: the siege of Jerusalem in 1948 when Arab attackers tried to conquer 100,000 Jewish men, women and children by cutting the pipeline to the only source of water. Despite thirst, famine, blockage and shelling, the city held out for two months before its deliverance; the heroic endurance of its population has become legendary. But Miss Redgrave has probably never heard of the siege of Jerusalem and the prolonged agony of its Jewish inhabitants, so she failed to suggest a parallel more apt than Leningrad.

In the songs and stories of Tel Zaatar, Falangists and Christian Lebanese figured as the assailants. But the true villain of Miss Redgrave's tale soon emerged: the Zionists, the Zionist-imperialist-fascists. This triad kept surfacing as the explanation of the Lebanese civil war. Obviously Comrade Redgrave would disdain a more complex analysis of sectarian rifts, religious antagonism between Christian and Moslem, Syria's ambiguous role or conflicting national ambitions of Arab states interested in the possible dismemberment of Lebanon. A simplistic slogan was there to be brandished like a gun: the Zionists, the Elders of Zion. Not the Jews, to be sure; the English subtitles were never sullied by references to Jews. But there was no missing the Arabic *Yahud* which somehow became transformed into "Zionist" in the English translation.

The film gives a revealing picture of a PLO camp. The children, a very attractive lot, are shown in classrooms and in drill formations. Husky young men are shown undergoing arduous military training. Older women sew in workshops; younger women train as nurses. It is a close-knit community with an overriding purpose: to "liberate the homeland," to drive the "Zionists" out of Israel. Kindergarten children, elders and armed youths with whose exploits we are familiar reiterate this endlessly.

Miss Redgrave tenderly asks a little boy, "Where is your home?" "Safed," he replies. "Do you remember it?" "No, but my grandfather told me." Then follows a description of the six-room house from which grandfather had been driven.

Too bad that Miss Redgrave is so ignorant of the actual history of the conflict; otherwise she might not have chosen Safed. In this town the British, expecting an imminent Arab invasion, advised the 1500 orthodox

Jews who lived there to evacuate the ancient city, sacred in Jewish tradition. The Jews refused to leave but the more numerous Arabs joined in a mass exodus at the bidding of their leaders. I was in Safed in 1948 and remember the bewilderment of the small Jewish population at the Arab flight. But the little boy has been thoroughly indoctrinated. His family was "expelled." And the myth takes root, all documentary evidence to the contrary.

A charming little girl is asked, "What would you do if you saw a wounded Israeli soldier?" The child answers virtuously, "I would take care of him and explain our cause to him." Then Miss Redgrave inquires disingenuously, "What would you do if he tried to kill you?" At this point my mind wandered to the prioress of the Canterbury Tales who devoutly recounts a medieval tale of a Christian child murdered by the Jews. The killing of children: the hoariest of anti-Semitic libels. As to the child's touching altruism, those who have examined Arab textbooks know that their inspiration comes more from Nazi pedagogue Streicher than from the Sermon on the Mount.

The children appear healthy, well fed and well dressed. So do the young men and their counsellors. In general conditions in the camp shown seem better than those of an average Arab village in Jordan or Lebanon. And we may be sure that Miss Redgrave has no interest in creating a Potemkin village of economic well-being. This situation is not surprising. For 30 years the camps have been maintained by UNRWA, to which the United States makes a substantial annual contribution. Because of the provision of basic housing, food, schooling and other necessities the camp rolls from the first have been swelled by local Arabs who sought the advantages provided to the original 600,000 Arabs who had left the part of Palestine that became Israel. Subsidies from the oil states and the Communist bloc have succeeded in transforming many of the camps into relatively comfortable military settlements. Nothing makes this clearer than an account of the last days of Tal Zaatar as reported by a correspondent of *The Los Angeles Times* two years ago. The reporter described looting by the victorious Falangists: "Many looters were joined by whole families driving into the camp to see what they could retrieve for their own homes. Their booty included living-room suites, television sets, air conditioning units, refrigerators, carpets, clothing—and even a Chinese lacquered table." Very few Arab villagers without "refugee" status could boast of such possessions.

To emphasize the theme of class struggle the scene shifts to various specimens of the Lebanese bourgeoisie. A portly Lebanese cleric with a large cross descants on the need to fight international communism and to protect Lebanese "banks" and homes against the hungry hordes. An equally gross Lebanese capitalist in luxurious surroundings states matter-of-factly that he

is prepared "to kill" Palestinian children because they will grow up into enemies. Shots of a Lebanese Riviera and elegant lollers in beach chairs provide further desired contrasts between fascist oppressor and revolutionary ardor.

The outrageous statements of the capitalist heavies shocked a young Arab woman whom I heard expostulating in English to a companion in the ladies' room after the showing: "I don't get it. He says that he wants to kill children." Miss Redgrave has the killing of children on her mind. But they are not the children of Maalot and Kiryat Shmoneh deliberately massacred by the PLO revolutionaries she celebrates, or the children murdered last March by terrorists who landed on the Israeli coast.

An eloquent, eminently photogenic PLO spokesman explains why the PLO concentrates in southern Lebanon and why the warriors must return: they have to be close to the Israeli border to facilitate raids into that country. Besides Lebanon is only an extension of Northern Galilee. Borders are artificial, he tells us. Such candor must be respected. It may also account for Israel's refusal to have this force of would-be liberators on her northern frontier. Terrorist incursions and shelling of kibbutzim make too long a list for complacency. Furthermore, the Arabs seem to be getting their nomenclature mixed. Till the 1960s, when Arab refugees were transformed into Palestinians, Arab leaders bolstered their anti-Zionist arguments with the assertion that there was no such entity as Palestine; the locale was really southern Syria. Only Jewish pioneers proclaimed themselves as Palestinians. Now the process has been reversed; Lebanon is part of Palestine. How well does this sit with the proponents of a Greater Syria? In either case the definitions bode ill for the independence of Lebanon.

In the finale a rapt Vanessa questions a patriarchal Arafat, who smiles benevolently at his enthusiastic auditor. He oozes goodwill for the Jews who will be allowed to live in a "democratic Palestine." Neither speaker bothers to mention that all "Zionists"—that is to say the overwhelming majority—will be thrust out of this non-racist Utopia. This interview apparently has been doctored for the American showing. Theodore Bikel, president of Actors Equity in the United States, who had read a transcript of the film, reported that the original script contained the following exchange: Arafat, "The only solution of the Middle East problem is the liquidation of the state of Israel." Miss Redgrave agrees, "Certainly." This bit of harmony has been diplomatically omitted.

It is not surprising that so much of the film is devoted to an episode in the Lebanese civil war. Little mileage would be gotten out of a straightforward report of actual PLO achievements: the gunning down of civilians at airports, the slaughter of Puerto Rican nuns at Lydda or of Israeli athletes at the Olympic games—the whole monstrous roster. The terrorists have been

redwashed into highminded revolutionaries, and it would be naive to carp at the producer's scandalous ignorance of the history of Zionist settlement or at her primitive manipulation of facts. A fanatical believer is not likely to confuse an issue with relevant truths. In its dogmatic ferocity, its fixation on the destruction of the small Jewish state, the film is a vivid exhibit of the mentality of the extreme Right and Left.

The chief value of the film is the way it reveals how justified is Israel's opposition to a massive PLO presence in southern Lebanon. Any viewer who toyed with the notion that a PLO state on the West Bank might be anything but a first move toward the attempted dismantling of the Jewish state would be swiftly disabused.

As one who hopes for the eventual withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank to borders defined in a genuine peace settlement, I can think of sounder solutions for the satisfaction of Palestinian nationalism than the apotheosis of the PLO.

Marie Syrkin

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And why the US doesn't seem to care.

How India Got the Bomb

The US is undermining its own nuclear nonproliferation policy—only a year ago the centerpiece of President Carter's rhetoric about a safer world—by submitting to blackmail and exports of enriched uranium to India. India illegally used US heavy water and Canadian equipment to build and explode a nuclear device in 1974, and still refuses to accept full-fledged international controls and safeguards over its vast nuclear establishment.

On April 26 Carter approved a 7.6-ton shipment of enriched uranium for the Tarapur nuclear power station near Bombay. In doing so he overruled the Nuclear Regulatory Commission which had tried to block the sale. Carter's action pretty much destroys US credibility in its attempts to discourage the production of bomb-grade plutonium by countries that have attained this technological ability to do so. The strangely permissive policy toward India is certain to complicate forthcoming plutonium-cycle negotiations with Euratom, the Western European nuclear authority, which are required by the new Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act.

India's blackmail threat was that unless Carter approved the shipment, it would begin reprocessing into plutonium the 200 tons of spent US nuclear fuel from 26 earlier shipments, dating back to 1969, and currently held at the Tarapur installation. A reprocessing plant already exists at Tarapur, and the present stockpile could produce enough plutonium to assemble hundreds of nuclear weapons at least the size of the 15-kiloton type that was exploded in 1974.

Actually, it is only a question of time before India embarks on this much-feared plutonium reprocessing. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, passed by Congress in March, provides that US exports of nuclear materials must be cut off within 18 months to any country that fails to accept full international safeguards. This means that India could expect no export licenses for enriched uranium after September, 1979, unless New Delhi accepts the safeguards. But there is no likelihood that India will do so. Prime Minister Morarji R. Desai insists that India has no plans to build or explode nuclear weapons, but he has posed virtually impossible conditions for signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (which bans nuclear arms for countries outside the big-power club) or going along with the safeguards. Desai says India will agree to full safeguards only when the US, the Soviet Union and Britain sign a complete nuclear test ban, agree not to add further to their nuclear arsenals and agree to a gradual reduction of nuclear stockpiles with a view to their eventual elimination.

India insists that either an immediate suspension of enriched uranium shipments or the congressionally mandated cut-off next year would violate a 1963 agreement under which the US committed itself to provide fuel for Tarapur for 30 years. Desai believes that any halt in shipments would free India from a provision in the 1963 agreement requiring "a joint determination" by the two governments before plutonium reprocessing could be performed at the Indian facilities. In a speech before Indian parliament last March 23, Desai warned that if the US refuses to keep supplying enriched uranium for Tarapur, "then all ways are open to us." The US ambassador to India, Robert F. Goheen, has advised the administration of the "probability" of Indian reprocessing if a cut-off occurs.

India is holding hostage the 200 tons of spent US fuel despite a provision in the 1963 agreement that Washington has the "first option" to repurchase excess nuclear material from Tarapur. Testifying before a Senate subcommittee on May 24, Joseph S. Nye, deputy to the under secretary of state for security assistance, said that discussions with India about disposal of the spent fuel "are still in an early stage." Other administration officials have said privately that the talks are deadlocked.

The administration must decide whether to halt

enriched uranium shipments before the September 1979 deadline—at least one more Indian export license application is expected to come up before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission within the year—or to keep supplying Tarapur until the deadline and beyond. The law permits the president to issue a waiver of the safeguards requirement for shipments after the deadline. Having authorized the 7.6-ton shipment in April, Carter may certify the next shipment even if the commission opposes it because the administration firmly believes that, for political reasons, India should be placated as long as possible. In his Senate testimony the State Department's Nye said that a waiver is unlikely, but other officials say privately that "a lot may change in a year."

Senator John Glenn, who presided over the Senate hearings on the latest export license application last May, cited the 1974 Indian explosion—and its illegal origins—as a reason for unhappiness with the Indians: "This event continues to cast doubt on the strength of India's commitment to the non-proliferation undertaking . . . and especially to India's intentions in the event US exports are terminated, either at this juncture or at some time in the future. Of more direct significance . . . is the possibility that India has a continuing nuclear explosives program building on what was learned in the 1974 test."

Earlier, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had split, 2-2, on whether to approve the license for the 7.6-ton shipment. Commissioners Peter Bradford and Victor Gilinsky had voted against it on the grounds that the US had no assurance, as required by the Non-Proliferation Act, that India would not reprocess the spent nuclear fuel it now holds. It was because of the split that the Commission referred the final decision to President Carter.

But why did the president rule in favor of India? The formal answer, clearly far from convincing, was provided by the State Department in its communications to the commission and in testimony before congressional committees.

Oddly, the State Department has been India's ardent supporter in this matter. State's position reflects, among others, the strong views of Goheen. An official familiar with the ambassador's reports said that Goheen "suffers from 'clientitis' more than most of our ambassadors."

The department argued that an immediate halt of shipments to Tarapur would defeat diplomatic efforts to persuade India to accept international safeguards on other parts of its nuclear establishment: the Prerera plutonium reprocessing plant (where India has been reprocessing its own spent fuel), a fuel fabrication plant at Hyderabad and four research reactors at Trombey, near Bombay. India had accepted international safeguards on the Tarapur power station with its supplies of US enriched uranium, and on two Canadian-built natural uranium power reactors. But

the reprocessing plant and the research reactors are also critical. The plutonium for the 1974 explosion was from a research reactor: one built by Canada and using US heavy water. Even Nye, in his Senate testimony, was not overly hopeful about getting India to accept full-fledged safeguards. He would say only that "the estimate is not zero or close to zero . . . it is not trivial." So this faint hope is not much of a reason to continue the shipments. The administration said India was not wholly wrong in believing that the US would violate the 1963 enriched uranium agreement by halting shipments as a sanction to enforce the safeguards, although Nye said in his testimony that Desai's interpretation of the agreement "differs from our interpretation."

Finally, the administration argued that a halt on shipments to India would undercut the credibility of the US in the rest of the world as a reliable enriched uranium supplier. The same reasoning, of course, could apply to the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Act on mandatory cut-offs, but the administration could not say so publicly. The act, incidentally, was opposed by the US nuclear industry, which foresaw a loss of markets if the non-proliferation policy was adopted by the Carter administration.

The Carter administration is not unique in its extraordinary tolerance of Indian nuclear programs. The story, never before fully told, goes back to the Eisenhower years. That was the time when the US, under the "Atoms for Peace" program, began sharing nuclear technology with underdeveloped countries and providing research reactors and fuel to those interested in atomic power. The US involvement with India began in 1956, when India requested a supply of US heavy water for a research reactor that Canada had provided as part of its own program of cooperation with underdeveloped countries. The Canadians had no heavy water available at the time, and the US was glad to oblige. The agreement to supply 21 tons of heavy water—used to achieve the necessary slowing down of neutrons—specified that the material would be confined to "peaceful uses." The reactor, originally known as CIR (Canadian-Indian Reactor), was renamed CIRUS to acknowledge US participation.

India quickly developed its own interpretation of what constituted "peaceful uses," including what it called "peaceful nuclear explosions." This interpretation was not shared by the US, Britain and Canada, all of which continue to believe that *no* nuclear explosion is peaceful. In 1963, when the US signed the 30-year agreement to supply enriched uranium for the planned Tarapur power plant, there was no reason to suspect that India was thinking either of nuclear explosions or of reprocessing spent fuel into plutonium. Both the US fuel and the Tarapur plant were covered by safeguard requirements (later confirmed in an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Commission), and

nobody in Washington or Ottawa worried about the CIRUS research reactor.

It's clear in hindsight that the Indians began planning their nuclear explosion in 1969, just as the Tarapur plant began operating and the decision was made to proceed with a plutonium reprocessing plant there. In May 1970, Vikram A. Sarabhai, a top official of the Department of Atomic Energy, announced that India would not try to develop nuclear weapons, but would keep open the option of peaceful underground nuclear detonations. About the same time, Indian scientists—most of them trained in the US and Canada—decided that the only way to obtain plutonium for such a nuclear detonation would be to extract it secretly from the CIRUS reactor.

Both the US and Canada became suspicious sometime in 1970 that India was preparing for a nuclear test. But no real pressure was applied. Nye testified last May, "In 1970, we sent India a note saying that we regarded any use of [heavy water] for explosives as a violation. The Indians did not accept that interpretation and so indicated to us. So, from the Indian perspective there has been no violation by the use of that heavy water."

Rather remarkably, the Nixon administration let matters rest there. No record exists of any further remonstrances with the Indians about misuse of US heavy water. And US intelligence was caught napping: there is no indication that the Central Intelligence Agency knew that India had seriously begun development on a nuclear device.

The Canadians were more aggressive. Visiting New Delhi in January 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau told Indira Gandhi, the Indian prime minister, that he wanted to know the truth about the Indian nuclear program and that Canada regarded any detonations as incompatible with peaceful uses of atomic energy. He told her that if India exploded a device, relations with Canada would come under a shadow. Three months later, Trudeau sent Gandhi a letter declaring that Indian-Canadian relations would be "damaged" if an explosion occurred with the use of CIRUS facilities. Gandhi wrote back that Canada's views on peaceful nuclear explosions were a "unilateral definition."

In his Senate testimony this year, the State Department's Nye acknowledged that the 1956 agreement on heavy water with India was "very badly written on our part. It referred only to peaceful uses, not to explosive uses." Nye also remarked that the roots of current proliferation problems go back "into a looseness which went into the working of the early days of the Atoms for Peace Program." No word has been said officially, however, on what might have been done in 1970, when the Indians were beginning their secret project and the US still presumably had leverage.

Something could have been done. A senior administration official familiar with the history of the Indian explosion suggested recently that "Nixon and

Kissinger should have threatened denunciation of the agreement for enriched uranium for Tarapur if the Indians didn't commit themselves to forego explosions. This was leverage we had at the time, just as Tarapur was coming on-stream. But we did nothing."

When the Indian device was exploded in Rajasthan desert on May 18, 1974, the US failed to respond adequately to what was the first known breach in the non-proliferation front. Unlike Canada, which condemned the explosion and ended all nuclear cooperation with India, the US confined itself to an expression of regret. In fact, the Nixon administration did not even admit that American heavy water was involved in the CIRUS operation, making the US an unwitting party to the Indian explosion scheme. The White House, the State Department and the Atomic Energy Commission formed a conspiracy of silence on this point of US involvement. A letter from Indian Ambassador T.N. Kaul to Secretary of State Kissinger, claiming that the materials used in the nuclear device were "100 per cent" of Indian origin, seemed to satisfy the administration, and they didn't push the matter.

When Carter administration officials begrudgingly admitted this year that US heavy water had been used in the CIRUS reactor as the Indians were extracting plutonium, they still claimed that the US supply had been "commingled" with heavy water produced in India. But qualified scientists reject Kaul's claim. They say that it was entirely US heavy water. Canadian specialists who built the CIRUS likewise say it is untrue that the reactor "leaks," necessitating the introduction of Indian material. Canadian officials were furious with the US for "not telling the truth" about the American involvement in the plutonium venture.

Contrary to subsequent public statements, the US never interrupted the supply of enriched uranium for Tarapur. It went on shipping it despite a communication on July 10, 1974, from the chairman of the Indian Department of Atomic Energy, H.N. Sethna, to the chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission, Dixy Lee Ray, that India "is unable to share the understanding of the US Government . . . that the use in or for any nuclear explosive device of any material or equipment subject to US Agreements for Cooperation in Civil Uses of Atomic Energy is precluded."

Again, the US silently accepted Indian interpretations of joint nuclear agreements and simply hoped for the best.

Our basic policy toward India's nuclear experiments has not changed under Carter, his pronouncements on non-proliferation notwithstanding. The result of this policy—a continuation of past policies—is that the US now finds itself subject to Indian blackmail on plutonium reprocessing and that our global stand on non-proliferation is no longer credible.

Tad Szulc

Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Hipness Can Wait

Heaven Can Wait (Paramount). When Warren Beatty decides to switch, he doesn't fool around. His last picture, *Shampoo*, was about sex. In his new one he has a single chaste Jimmy Stewart kiss, and that's it. *Shampoo* was his entry, if that's the word, in the mod humping sweepstakes; the new one is a try at the old-fashioned Mr. Nice Guy vein. I draw no moral from the fact that the new one is much more successful.

This is a remake of *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*, the 1941 film with Robert Montgomery which was directed by the prolific but otherwise unremembered Alexander Hall. *Mr. Jordan* was such a hit that Hall made a musical sequel in 1947 called *Down to Earth*. That one has disappeared, but *Mr. Jordan* is an established favorite, familiar to many through reruns and TV. The source of it all was a play by Harry Segall, never produced in New York, called *Heaven Can Wait*, which title Beatty has used for his film; and just to confuse things, there's a previous film called *Heaven Can Wait* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1943) which has nothing to do with any of this.

The central gimmick is that a young athlete is killed by mistake—one of the Heavenly Messengers has goofed and has gathered him up before his appointed time. The athlete complains of the injustice; a vicar of divinity called Mr. Jordan agrees and implants the athlete's soul in the body of a dying nasty financier who then does not die and who changes character. We see the athlete as he always was: the rest of the world sees him as the financier recovered. He meets a girl . . . and so on.

Beatty produced the remake, co-directed with Buck Henry, and collaborated on rewriting the script with Elaine May, naturally bringing it up to date and also, shrewdly, changing the

boxer of the original to a quarterback for the LA Rams. Beatty took two gambles, both of which have paid off. One was the risk of basing a picture today on afterlife whimsy. For me the first test was the first moment after Beatty's mistaken death, when we see him strolling across an endless cloudy vista with the Messenger, played by Buck Henry. (In the first film it was Edward Everett Horton.) I felt a quick surge of resistance, but they came on at me so straightforwardly, so dependently, that I thought "What the hell," and went along. From then on it flowed. Later, when Mr. Jordan, played by James Mason (the first was Claude Rains), explains that everything in life is prearranged and planned, I felt as if I were in a candy box—by choice—and had no right to complain of the diet.

The second gamble, settled for us almost before the first, was Beatty's casting of himself as Mr. Nice Guy. He has often played sympathetic characters but never a head-on, Frank Capra-Gary Cooper, love-me character. (It's always a slight jolt to remember that Capra did not direct *Mr. Jordan*.) Beatty, who has exercised himself into terrific shape, has shed all his shadows and introversions and menace; is breezy and direct; proves his bona fides by chucking some sensational passes at football practice in the beginning; tootles his clarinet while watching films of football plays; and buddies up with a father-figure, the team trainer Jack Warden (formerly James Gleason). It still works: health, athletics, single-mindedness, unruffling values, a good relationship with a "father," and no girls. I don't think that Norman Rockwell painted the poster for the film, but he could have. And Beatty fulfills it.

I wish I could say as much for Julie

Christie (formerly Evelyn Keyes) who plays the girl and who is not weathering well. Dyan Cannon and Charles Grodin, as the financier's wife and her lover, cartoon around. (Paul Sylbert's design for the wife's bedroom is grotesquely overdone.) But Jack Warden is crisp as a crusty roll. I can pay Warden no higher praise than to say that he's almost as good as Jimmy Gleason in the scene where the financier, who looks like the financier to him, tries to convince him that, inside, he's the quarterback, his old friend. Really funny.

William A. Fraker, whose camera was last looking at *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, has made a switch, too. The fashion-photo cool of that film is replaced here by warm interiors and occasional overlighting, meant to "movie-ize" a shot. (For instance, the scene in which Beatty comes down the stairs from the roof of the financier's office building after a helicopter landing.) Fraker manages to suggest, in wide screen and color, the coziness of the old frame and the not quite black-and-white.

It's an odd line-up to do a remake of a sentimental oldie: Beatty, Henry, and Elaine May. Not exactly an association one would leap to. But they have brought it off. (For a sample of the good co-direction, see the quiet scene in which the coach addresses the Rams just before the Superbowl game.) They haven't looked for a balance between

Films Worth Seeing

Cat and Mouse. French mystery, so smooth and sexy that we almost forget about the murders.

F.I.S.T. Sylvester Stallone fairly forceful in an old-fashioned chronicle-melodrama about labor struggles through decades.

Go Tell the Spartans. The first US fiction film to treat the Vietnam war with at least some truth. 1964. Eleven years to go.

Pirosmani. A gentle Soviet picture about an (actual) primitive painter, turn of the century. Done with a fine eye and dramatically successful quiet.

Slave of Love. 1917, southern Russia. A movie studio shoots a silly romance as the Revolution approaches. Contrived but colorful.

SK

sentiment and modernity but, as did the original, between sentiment and laughs. Thirty-seven years later, it still works.

And I probably shouldn't gripe. It is what it is, pleasantly enough. But I can't repress a touch of bitterness at the success that this film will surely have when I remember that May wrote and directed *Mikey and Nicky* (TNR, Jan. 1 & 8, '77), which was somewhat ungainly but which was one of the most ruthlessly strong and truthful American films in years and which disappeared quickly.

The Cheap Detective (Columbia). A disaster, predictable. The script is by Neil Simon, whose previous private-eye parody *Murder by Death* was dismal. It stars Peter Falk, who was unfunny in that earlier one; it's directed by Robert Moore who helped him be unfunny then and now.

Simon is a sketch writer. *The Goodbye Girl* is virtually the only sustained script in his whole theater-film career, and *The G.G.* is modeled so patently on classic film romantic comedies that it's almost like a composer resetting a standard text. For the most part Simon's plays and films are collections of "bits"—two Suites, Plaza and California, are explicitly so. *The Cheap Detective* is a 10-minute sketch 10 times too long. It's a takeoff on *The Maltese Falcon*, crossed—double-crossed—with *Casablanca*. Not exactly a marvelously original idea, to begin with, and after those first 10 minutes, it seems as if everyone in and around the film feels sentenced to finish it because 100 minutes is how long a feature must be.

Falk is dull. He does a dull Bogart imitation. I felt that he had started to be dull even before the shooting began, like Rod Steiger as W.C. Fields. Falk at his best can be a convincing naturalistic actor (as in *Mikey and Nicky*), but he has no touch of the comic. Nor has Louise

Fletcher or Fernando Lamas or John Houseman, who support him, so the going never gets going. Marsha Mason and Stockard (Wasted Again) Channing are potentially funny; Dom De Luise and Madeline Kahn at least think they're funny. But all of them, comic or not, are ground into the same long sausage.

The least of Moore's sins is that he didn't even know that what was going on in front of his camera was unfunny.

Convoy (United Artists). Every person in the performing arts needs at least two talents: a specific one (acting or directing or whatever) and the general one of self-management, of choosing the right material and of "editing" one's self. In specific talent Red Skelton was the best physical comic in the US since Buster Keaton; but he had almost none of that general talent. He chose poorly and didn't know when to stop or what to leave out. So he was never anything but a success instead of the successful first-class artist he might have been.

Then there's Sam Peckinpah, who directed *The Wild Bunch* but then did *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*. He did the moderately interesting *The Getaway* but blotted it with Ali McGraw, and now he does *Convoy* which is so unspeakably awful a script that the McGraw blot, repeated, hardly shows. It's something about a truckers' "revolt" in the Southwest, not worth one descriptive word more. But, even in this hoey, Peckinpah shows that he's a born director. See the first minute, if you can, in which, with the camera of Harry Stradling Jr., he transforms a strip of black highway across white Arizona desert into a modernist fantasy of heat and light. Then leave. And mourn that Peckinpah has only one of the two requisite talents.

Double Indemnity and *Mildred Pierce*). Very few people remember Cain the journalist, Cain the playwright, Cain the Hollywood scriptwriter, Cain the short-story writer, Cain the author of 19 novels (two of which have not been

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An Appreciation of James M. Cain

With the quiet death of James M. Cain in late October, America lost one of its most prolific and versatile writers. If he is remembered at all, it is for the best-selling novels, later made into box office hits (*The Postman Always Rings Twice*,

published yet and the best of which is scheduled to be reissued by Vintage Press next spring).

I am not sure any American writer spanned the entire 20th-century

be proud to look back upon.

Cain, to me, was the typically concerned but uncommitted American of the early 20th century, a man who had that vague, undefined urge to be a

have been less kind. Joyce Carol Oates says that "Cain's novels serve up, in the guise of moral tracts, the lesson of the child who dares too much and must be punished . . ." and she concludes that, "although he deals constantly with the Artistic, Cain, it will be said, never manages to become the artist." And W. M. Frohock states flatly that nothing of Cain's is "outside the category of trash."

More temperate critics argue that the main trouble with Cain was that he did not write about "significant people," that his characters were bums, losers and criminals. This always infuriated Cain. He thought his critics were snobs and he would cite something Carey Wilson, a Hollywood producer, once said to him. "What I like about your books," said Wilson, "is that they're about dumb people that I know that I bump into every day in the parking lot. I can believe them. And you put them in interesting situations. After all, how much do I care about a goddam hobo and a waitress out there in that place you put them in your first novel? But, for chrissake, I couldn't put it down for two hours when I read that book."

Most of Cain's characters were like the people you bump into every day—or at least you used to in the 1930s. And if they were dumb losers, it is worth noting that most average Americans in the 1930s were dumb losers, or at least they felt pretty dumb and hopeless in the face of a collapsed economy and deteriorating society. Cain could have paraphrased Lincoln and pointed out that God must have liked these dumb people because he made so many of them. And it is also worth noting that when Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, and Tobias Smollett began writing their realistic novels in the 18th century, critics said the same things they later said about Cain, that they were interested primarily in "entertainment" and their characters were all "low-life."

However, many others have paid tribute to Cain as a writer. Albert Camus was an admirer of Cain and patterned *The Stranger* on *Postman*. Tom Wolfe once advised Norman Mailer to read some James M. Cain to learn how to write a novel; Stephen King, author of two thrillers, *Carrie* and *Salem's Lot*, said of Cain: "Everyone should study him in writing class, instead of the marsh gas they put out for us to admire." Ross Macdonald called *Postman* and *Double Indemnity* "a pair of native American masterpieces, back to back." John Macdonald said all writers owe a special debt to Cain and Dashiell Hammett: "They



James M. Cain by Roy Hoopes

American experience as Cain did. In 1914, at the age of 22, he decided to be a writer (a decision reached while sitting on a bench in Lafayette Park, across from the White House), and in 1918 he began his career as a journalist, first for the *Baltimore American*, later for the *Sun*. In 1919, he edited the *Lorraine Cross*, an army magazine for the 29th Division in Europe. In the 1920s, his first play was produced (*Crashing the Gates*), his first collection of 16 short stories was published (*Pastorale*) and he was writing editorials on a variety of subjects for Walter Lippmann on the old *New York World*. In the 1930s, he worked briefly as managing editor for Harold Ross on *The New Yorker*, then moved to Hollywood to begin a 17-year career as a scriptwriter. He also wrote *Postman*, *Double Indemnity*, *Serenade* and two other novels. In the 1940s, he wrote *Mildred Pierce*, *Past All Dishonor*, *The Butterfly* and three other novels. In the 1950s, he wrote three novels; in the 1960s, he wrote two novels; and in the present decade, in his 80s, he wrote two novels. And all during these writing years, his articles were appearing in *The American Mercury*, *Esquire*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Nation*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Vanity Fair*, and recently, *The Washington Post Potomac* magazine. It is a career any writer would

writer but was not quite ready to make the all-out commitment to become a novelist. So he drifts into journalism because it keeps him writing every day. But all the while, he is thinking of writing that novel, if not the great American novel. Of course, most of our journalist, would-be novelists never get around to writing that book, although they keep talking about it for most of their career, until finally only bartenders will listen to them. But Cain was one of the first of that breed to actually write his novels: and there would be others—John O'Hara, Allen Drury, Sloan Wilson, Fletcher Knebel. In recent years, the non-fiction book has replaced the novel as the goal of the would-be book authors in journalism, but the trend back to the novel seems to be returning, especially since the financial success of columnist William Safire's *Full Disclosure*.

Unfortunately, few of these journalist-cum-novelists have fared well with the critics ("strange surrogates of God," Cain called them). Edmund Wilson, in his famous essay, "The Boys in the Back Room," lumped Cain with several others, including John O'Hara, John Steinbeck and William Saroyan, as "poets of the tabloid murder." He did rank Cain as the best of the bunch, which is no small accolade. But others

were the big guys changing the definitions of suspense and readability, forcing all of us smaller fry to cut more cleanly and deeply, to delete the windiness of tortuous explanation, to get on with it—showing instead of telling.” And in the only full-length literary study of Cain (*James M. Cain*, Twayne Publishers, 1970) David Madden says Cain “takes us through experiences whose special quality is found in no other writer’s work” and that “Cain’s art, more than anything else, moves even the serious reader to almost complete emotional commitment to the traumatic experiences Cain renders.”

I think it is significant that all the above recognition comes from writers rather than literary critics, and if I were forced to come up with one term that best described James M. Cain, it is that he was a “writer’s writer.”

I first read Cain in college immediately after World War II, and I found his prose almost breathtaking. And it makes no difference whether it is in his novels, his articles, his letters, or just short memos he has written me, his writing is beautiful. He seems almost to have invented that lean, sparse newspaper style of the 1920s, which often makes the writer sound “tough,” when he is really trying to do nothing more than report the facts concisely and without embellishment. This pragmatic approach to language and life is one that most of the world associates with America and one reason, no doubt, why Cain has always been—and still is—so widely read abroad. Cain told me that he has been translated into 16 or 17 different languages.

Despite the fact that Cain’s prose never drags and appears so simple to write, it did not come easy. Cain said writing for him was hard and that he did not enjoy it and, further, that anyone who did was not a writer. A morning’s work usually whipped him, and he said most good writing comes in hot flashes, which a writer can sustain for two hours or so at the most. He knew that when his writing was coming easy it was not good: “If you’re not lying awake at night worrying about it, the reader isn’t going to either.”

Tom Wolfe says that today, 20 years later, Cain’s novels still amaze him, partly because “I can now see how complex Cain’s famous ‘fast-paced,’ ‘hard-boiled’ technique really is.” Ross Macdonald says Cain was a “conscious and deliberate artist”—and most critics agree that he elevated the popular novel to an art form. *Postman* hit American

literature like a little bombshell and not only because of the famous scene in which Cora (later played by Lana Turner in the movie) said “Rip me, rip me!” when Frank (John Garfield) was rough-

ing her up—after they had murdered the Greek—to make it look as if Cora had been in an accident. Cain went even further than Hemingway in paring his narrative and dialogue down to bare

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essentials. All the "he says" and "she says" and "he says" and "she says" were out. "I use the minimum number it is possible to use and be clear," Cain said in a preface to a later book, "as a rule, permitting myself only a *he said* to begin a patch of dialogue, with no others in between." He wrote that when he began *Postman*, Chambers (who was the first-person narrator of the story) seemed limited to *he says* and *she says* and it looked a bit monotonous. "Why all this *says-ing*? With quotes around it, would they be gargling it?"

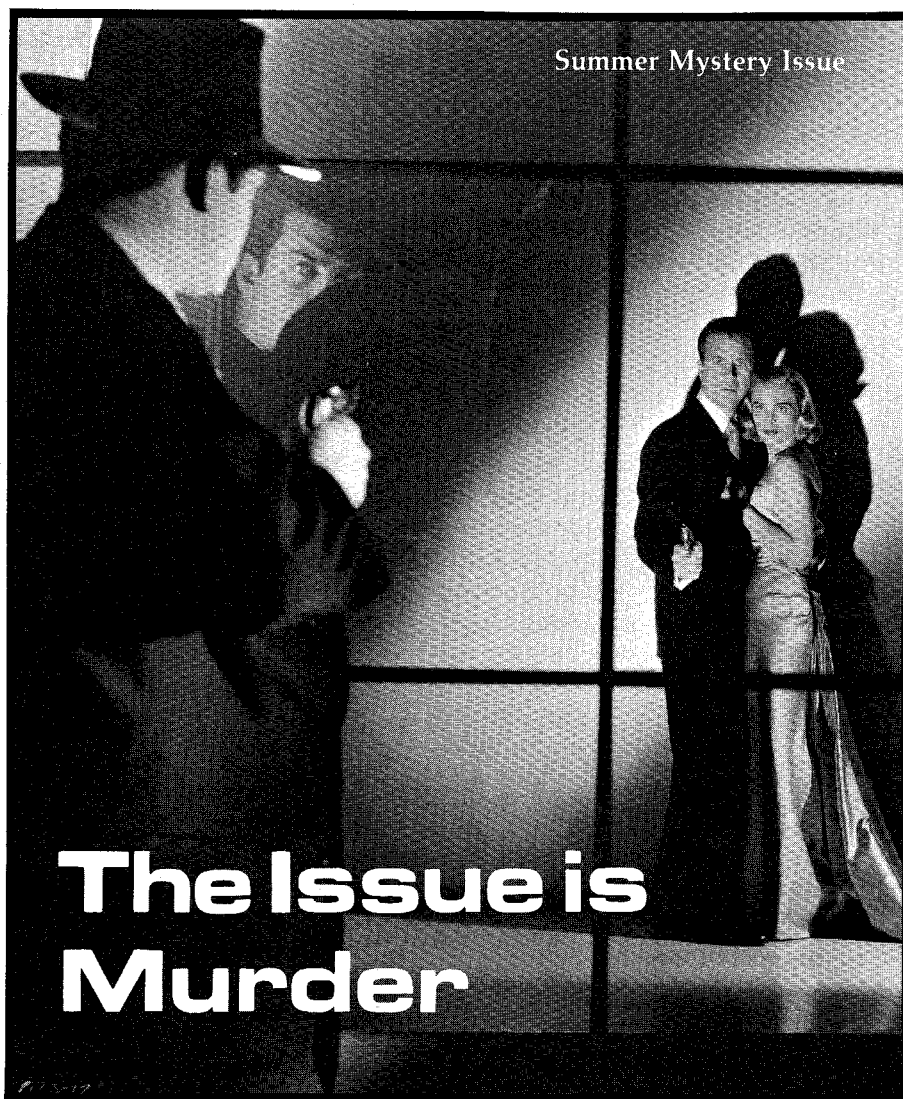
Cain decided: "It is about time this convention, this dreary flub-dub that lies within the talent of any magazine secretary, was dropped overboard and forgotten. If Jake is to warn Harold, 'an ominous glint appearing in his eye,' it would be a great deal smoother and more entertaining to the reader, though I grant you nothing like so easy, to slip a little, not too much of course, but just the right subtle amount of glint in the speech."

Quoting Oscar Wilde, Cain used to say that the "aim of the artist is to cast a spell on the beholder" and that if his books did that, that was all that mattered. All the critics have agreed that Cain's stories cast a powerful spell on their beholders. Franklin P. Adams called *Postman* "the most engrossing, unlaydownable book that I have any memory of" and Milton Hindus, writing in the old *New York Herald Tribune*, said "the name of James Cain, by itself, has become a guaranteed trademark of swift entertainment."

Of course, one of Cain's attractions as a popular entertainer was the fact that he wrote about forbidden subjects—incest, prostitution, latent homosexuality and murder—not contrived murder to keep the reader engrossed while the detective tries to solve the case, but real murder by two people for love and/or money. In his articles and editorials he also wrote about hundreds of other subjects in unmistakable prose. As Carl Bode, a professor of literature at the University of Maryland, said at Cain's memorial service: "You cannot pigeon-hole James M. Cain. He is not a tough guy, not a detective story writer and not a Hemingway. He was himself and there has never been any writer quite like him."

Roy Hoopes

Roy Hoopes is a Washington freelance writer.



Summer Mystery Issue

The Issue is Murder

The Bettmann Archive

Murder at Noon

Michael Avallone

Some mystery writers turn out superbly crafted books so different from one another that each might also have had a separate author. Others write mysteries whose characters, scenery, viewpoint, concerns and style are so similar from book to book that together they form a world of their own, personal to the author and recognizable to the reader as one recognizes the El Greco look or the Bartok sound. These authors are the universe makers, and Michael Avallone is one of them. What sets him apart from his colleagues is that he built his world in the way the British once claimed to have built their empire—by inadvertence.

The son of a stonecutter, Avallone was born in 1924 and raised in a Bronx tenement among 16 siblings. As a teenager growing up in the Depression

he wrote incessantly—in subways, buses, cafeterias, city parks and the family bathroom—and just as compulsively went to the movies, seeing anything and everything that was shown and forgetting nothing. He went from high school into World War II, serving as a line sergeant with a mechanized cavalry unit in Europe, and after his discharge returned to New York, broke but intent on becoming the postwar Thomas Wolfe. For five years he lived with his first wife and their infant son in a furnished room in Manhattan's West Eighties, selling stationery and candy and pots and pans by day, writing his arm off night after night without cracking a single market. Late in 1951 he turned his back on highfalutin' literature and decided that if the public

wanted girls-and-gore sagas in the manner of the then best-selling Mickey Spillane, then Avallone would pump them out. The result was the Nooniverse, a cycle of 30-odd novels about the life and crimes of Manhattan private eye Ed Noon.

Since Noon's debut in *The Tall Dolores* (1953) Avallone has published countless short stories and more than 150 paperback novels. Besides the Nooners he's done Gothics under five female bylines, juveniles, espionage thrillers, sex novels, and movie and TV tie-in books, each of them written in anywhere from four days to three weeks with never a word revised or reconsidered. The royalties from his smoking typewriter enabled Avallone to migrate to suburban New Jersey, where he lives with his second wife and their son and daughter and still bats out the words as speedily as ever—books, articles, rambunctious letters to editors, a torrent of correspondence, diatribes and self-advertisements beyond number.

But unlike most purveyors of drugstore fiction Mike Avallone is a true *auteur*, with a unique personality discernible throughout most of his books and especially throughout the Nooniverse. For despite his original intention, Ed Noon is no more than a distant literary cousin of Mike Hammer. Rather this Manhattan gumshoe is a cockeyed optimist, a motormouthed clown, a movie and baseball nut, a lover of luscious ladies and lousy jokes ("Hi, Noon!" his friends greet him), an emotional pushover, and in many respects a child in an adult body. The key to his adventures is simply that Avallone himself is an even more fanatical old-movies buff than his fantasy alter ego. He's not just in love with Hollywood's output of the 1930s and 1940s but immersed in those flicks, drunk on them, obsessed by them, so that when he sits down at the typewriter the unrelated fragments of dozens of vintage films leap from his cine-satiated mind to the pages and fill them with chaotic, jumbled, raucous and frenetic life. Pick up a Nooner and you'll find on one page a character modeled on Boris Karloff or Sidney Greenstreet, on the next an incident or a few lines of dialogue from *Foreign Correspondent* or *Casablanca*, then an allusion to an ancient Gary Cooper vehicle followed by three successive scenes from Hitchcock or Welles or Huston films, and so on till the fadeout. Part of the fun of reading Avallone lies in encountering the world's most film-intoxicated man.

By conventional standards the Avallone output is a hopeless mess. His anarchic plots, all of them dealing with various groups of nasties competing for some outlandish McGuffin or other, are simply improvised as he goes along, and his style is an ungrammatical brain-jangling approximation of normal English, rife with misspellings and malapropisms and an aura of great potholer and thunderation:

"The U.N. Building. . . A towering beautiful slab of crystal pie standing tall and proud on New York's very dirty feet." (*The Living Bomb*, 1963)

"A gilt-framed reproduction looked down on we poor mortals." (*The Fat Death*, 1966)

"His thin mustache was neatly placed between a peaked nose and two eyes like black marbles." (*Assassins Don't Die in Bed*, 1968)

"She had tremendous hips and breasts encased in a silly short black fur jacket and calf-high boots."

"The cube flashbulbs which could shoot a set of four pictures without bothering to make adjustments was all set."

"Mady Lopez was stark naked, on her knees, still wearing the calf-high boots."

"She . . . unearthed one of her fantastic breasts from the folds of her sheath skirt."

"My stunned intellect, the one that found death in his own backyard with him standing only feet away, hard to swallow in a hurry, found the answer." (All from *The Horrible Man*, 1968.)

"Serena tried to wither me with a ton of scorn unloading from her green glims." (*Death Dives Deep*, 1970)

"His freshest laurel wreath was his recent interpretation of such tough aces like Stravinsky and Shostakovich; rendering their works on violin strings was like pushing peanuts up Mount Everest with your nose." (*Killer on the Keys*, 1973)

Among the typical inhabitants of the Nooniverse are a 440-pound mattress tester, a set of homicidal triplets, an evil college professor complete with pet assassin, a deadly female cosmetics tycoon, and an evangelist crusading against fat. Martinis are described as "amber and delicious," a doctor takes a

patient's temperature by feeling his pulse, two lovers in bed are compared to a tossed salad, the traditional Jewish toast is spelled *lach heim* and the traditional Italian farewell is twisted into *Caio, piasano*. When the plot screeches to a halt, a tongueless black dwarf is likely to invade the mouse auditorium walking on his hands and carrying a .45 in each foot. (The mouse auditorium is Noon's name for his one-room office and like every other phrase in Avallone it comes from a film, specifically Howard Hawks's 1939 flyboy flick *Only Angels Have Wings*, with Cary Grant and Jean Arthur.) Make the language do flipflops, mangle the metaphors like a trash compactor, slap down as many allusions to characters and incidents and lines and settings from old movies as the page can hold, add heaping measures of contempt for hippies, perverts, Commies, peaceniks, longhairs, pointyheads, militant blacks, liberated women and all other traitors to the John Wayne ethos. Season with a barrel of *chutzpah* and you have the recipe for the Nooniverse. "I was all tangled and brangled in a mystery and fantasy that made absolutely no sense," Noon remarks in *Death Dives Deep*, and so is the

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reader every time he dives into an Avallone novel. But somehow the whole impossible slumgullion lingers on the palate. Those who keep coming back for more servings are known as Noonatics.

If any of Avallone's multitudinous books is his testament it's *Shoot It Again, Sam* (1972). In the Nooners of the Vietnam years our hero is not just a Bogart-loving gumshoe but the part-time confidential investigator for a certain recently disgraced president of the United States. Eye or spy, however, Ed Noon remains the ultimate movie nut, and not only is each chapter of *Sam* prefaced with a line of dialogue from a Hollywood flick, but each of the novel's two "books" is introduced by a whole pageful of such lines. The president unaccountably assigns Noon to accompany a dead movie idol's body on a transcontinental train ride to its final resting place. (The deceased is clearly supposed to be John Wayne, although his radical son is obviously Peter Fonda and one of his ex-wives Lauren Bacall.) While the train is rolling through eastern California the corpse sits up in its coffin in a scene Noon describes as "something from one of those machine-made Universal horror pictures from the last generation." At this moment Chinese agents raid the train, grab the Noon man and hustle him off to a demonstration that they've seen *The Manchurian Candidate*. With the help of a cadre of brainwashers made up to look like Clark Gable, James Cagney and Peter Lorre, the Maoists soon have our boy convinced that he is none other than Sam Spade (as portrayed, of course, by Bogart). Then they reunite him with Brigid O'Shaughnessy and equip him with poison needle tipped shoes like Lotte Lenya's in *From Russia with Love*, having programmed what passes for Noon's brain so that the next time he's closeted with his good buddy the president he will kick Nixon into the hereafter with one blow to the shin. And this is only part of Avallone's marvelously cinematic tribute to the celluloid myths in which he is the late True Believer.

"Strong, tough, Manhattan cynical but underneath still a small boy. A movie lover. Cried when dogs got run over, helped little old ladies across the street, works for principle and integrity. Not an anti-hero. He believes the home team will win the old ball game in the ninth, that nice guys will not finish last and when the climax comes, the Good Guys will always beat the Bad Guys. He grew up that way, through the Depression

years, a second World War and all the time he dreamed in a million darkened movie houses. He embraced the word Hero; he believed there was no other way for a man to be." Thus the fantasy image, developed in book after book, of a man who can be called many things: fascist klutz, bastion of sanity and tradition, born storyteller, *enfant terrible*, patriot, pig, idealist, fool, some kind of nut, a hell of a nice guy. But whatever else might be said about Ed Noon and

Michael Avallone, one must say what Casper Gutman said to Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*: "By Gad, sir, you're a character, that you are!"

Francis M. Nevins Jr.

Francis M. Nevins Jr. is professor of law at St. Louis University. His newest mystery novel, *Corrupt and Ensnare*, is being published this summer by Putnam's.

Murder with Honor

Raymond Chandler

In 1951 *Picture Post* magazine wanted to do a story on Raymond Chandler and inquired with Chandler's Hollywood agent for information. What they were particularly interested in knowing was whether Philip Marlowe—Chandler's rugged, dashing private eye—had been modeled after the author himself. The agent passed the questions along to Chandler, a reclusive intellectual in his early 60s who lived in La Jolla with his ailing 80-year-old wife. In his reply to his agent, Chandler griped about the inanity of the *Picture Post*'s question and then proceeded with whimsical delight to compare himself with Marlowe. He said that he was tough enough to break a Vienna roll with his bare hands and was the sort of writer who preferred to do his research in the apartments of tall blondes or to rifle through the desks of other writers after hours. "I do not regard myself as a dead shot," he wrote, "but I am a pretty dangerous man with a wet towel. But all in all I think my favorite weapon is a twenty-dollar bill." Chandler's point, of course, was that he and Marlowe were not very much alike, but the letter itself—with its wry humor and subtly sarcastic touch of social commentary in the final line—shows how closely linked the author and hero really were, for the voice of Chandler in the letter echoes the voice of Marlowe in the novels.

Chandler once said that since he had been raised in England as a youth he had to learn American as though it were a foreign language, that he had to become consciously attuned to its slang and

grammatical nuances. He developed this American voice—alive with feisty wit, apt colloquialisms, and the haphazard syntax of authentic speech—by writing detective fiction for pulp magazines in the 1930s. In time, the voice belonged as much to the private man as it did to his fictional hero.

The early short stories and novelettes (virtually all of which are in print) are often crudely conceived, with trite toughness and banal violence, but there are flashes of talent in the quick dialogue and shimmering descriptions of Los Angeles which Chandler handled so masterfully in the novels. But the most intriguing aspect of the early fiction is the way that Chandler's experimentations with first and third-person narrative led him to create two dissimilar kinds of protagonists in stories with two distinct tones. In the first-person stories Chandler used a witty, self-deprecating, and self-revealing narrator who is clearly the most honest man in a thoroughly corrupt world. In the third-person stories, on the other hand, he wrote in a stark objective style which shows the influence of Dashiell Hammett on his early work, and the protagonists in these stories are taciturn and coldly efficient tough-guys taken from the same mold as Hammett's Sam Spade and the Continental Op.

More than any other writer in America, Hammett adhered rigidly to the principles of objective narrative technique, and other writers of hard-boiled detective stories, with the urging of Joseph T. Shaw, editor of the famed

Black Mask magazine, strove to emulate Hammett's crisp style. The idea of objective narrative was to place the narrator in the position of a neutral observer who sees and records the action but makes no attempt to interpret it or read the thoughts and emotions of the characters. The technique works marvelously for creating suspense, but, ultimately, it obfuscates the moral character of the hero. In Sam Spade's world one must play a game of endless deceit, but because Hammett refuses to look behind Spade's mask, refuses to certify the detective's morality, Spade himself seems, as Robert Edenbaum has suggested, "as unscrupulous and amoral as the 'enemy.'"

Several of Chandler's early protagonists—Pete Anglich of *Pickup on Noon Street*, Johnny DeRuse of *Nevada Gas*, Sam Delaguerra of *Spanish Blood*—have this same enigmatic quality. Delaguerra, for example, is a quick-tempered cop who is out to avenge the murder of an old friend. When he wants some information from Toribo, a Filipino hood, Delaguerra ties him to a bedpost with a wire coil that loops around the gunman's neck and starts interrogating:

Delaguerra jerked the wire taut against the brown throat. The yell was cut off as though by a switch. There was a strained anguished gurgle. Toribo's mouth drooled.

Delaguerra . . . spoke to him gently, with a dry, very deadly gentleness.

"You want to talk to me, spig. Maybe not right away, maybe not even soon. But after a while you want to talk to me."

The brutality of Delaguerra creates an atmosphere charged with menace, and the objective third-person narrative permitted—in a sense, demanded—that Chandler avoid any explanations of the thoughts behind his protagonist's savage actions. But the detective-narrator of the first-person stories is not capable of Delaguerra's viciousness, for he is a *hero* whose unambiguous morality is essential to the meaning of the story.

Whether he is anonymous or called Dalmas or Carmady, the detective-narrator of Chandler's early fiction is the direct precursor of Marlowe (first called by that name in *The Big Sleep*). An ironic and irreverent observer of life, the private eye reveals to the reader the warmth and sensitivity, even the fear, which he hides behind his mask of cynicism; moreover, he is not above poking fun at himself as he plays the role of the tough detective. Caught in a gun-drawn stand-off, he admits to the reader that his bluff is "thinner than the gold on



Drawing by Joe Morrocco

a weekend wedding band," and he mocks himself as a clue-hungry sleuth grubbing about for "footmarks in the dust." What makes this private detective so appealing is his self-professed fallibility, his humanness in the pursuit of truth.

It is this first-person narrator who embodies the ideal of Chandler's tough detective. While the author had learned invaluable lessons from Hammett, he chose to go his own way, for he saw another possibility for the hard-boiled genre. "I thought," he would say years later, "that perhaps I could go a bit further [than Hammett], be a bit more humane, get a bit more interested in people than in violent death."

Chandler's detective-narrator sprang fully to life in his first novel, *The Big Sleep* (1939). To get material for this novel Chandler used two of his earlier stories

and began a process which he later dubbed "cannibalization." Fusing separate characters, interweaving plots, and borrowing descriptive passages almost verbatim, he wrote a stunning novel which transcends the stories from which it was derived. A year later Chandler cannibalized three more stories to write *Farewell, My Lovely*, and he quickly followed with *The High Window* (1942) and *The Lady in the Lake* (1943).

Unlike Sam Spade or Sam Delaguerra, Marlowe is a character with an intellectual and emotional life beneath tough-guy facade. He's read a little Shakespeare and T. S. Eliot, he knows the difference between an azalea and a jacaranda, he has opinions about modern architecture, the rampant commercialism in California, and the cruelty of the gas chamber. He's a private eye

who doesn't like to carry a gun, and the one time he is forced to kill a man, he breaks down after shooting and begins to "laugh like a loon" in fear and revulsion. Death is a part of his everyday world, but Marlowe never grows calloused, never loses his capacity for compassion. In the maelstrom of violence and corruption he clings steadfastly—sometimes desperately—to the belief that he, as a righteous man, can save someone else from the forces of evil. Chandler, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1944, said that all art must have a "quality of redemption." He embodied that redemption in his own work in the unshakable rectitude of his hero—a "man of honor," a man who "must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world." In short, Marlowe is a knight embarked on his quest in the mean streets of Los Angeles. It is this touch of unembarrassed romantic idealism in the character of the detective which

Chandler brought to the tough-detective story.

Marlowe not only shares Chandler's voice, but also reflects the author's image of himself as a man. Chandler wanted very much to be considered as a serious author, and his correspondence reveals his belief that he was one of the finest writers in America. But in spite of the qualified nods he received from W.H. Auden and Edmund Wilson, he felt that he never got the praise he deserved because of the categorical rejection of the detective novel from the realm of high art. Marlowe is a reflection of Chandler in that he too has been rejected by the Establishment. The people in Chandler's fictional world dismiss Marlowe out of hand because he works in a profession bloated with stupid and sleazy little men; yet he, of course, is one of the few men who cares about truth and justice.

Both the author and his private eye respond to this rejection with similar moods or poses ranging from good-natured self-effacement to professional self-confidence to bitter indignation and self-pity. In Chandler's first four novels there is a balance in Marlowe's voice as there seems to have been a balance in Chandler's own life. (This was the most prolific period of Chandler's career as a writer, and he had not yet begun to fret over his lack of critical recognition.) The dominant tone of Marlowe's voice in these early novels is comic. In *Farewell, My Lovely*, for example, Marlowe awakens in a stupor in a locked room and assesses his situation:

"Okay, Marlowe . . . You're a tough guy. . . . You can take it. You've been sapped down twice, had your throat choked and been beaten half silly on the jaw with a gun barrel. You've been shot full of hop and kept under it until you're as crazy as two waltzing mice. And what does all that amount to? Routine. Now let's see you do something really tough, like putting your pants on."

The effect of this and other such passages is that they make Marlowe's other moods of sentimentality and self-righteousness seem to be justifiable swings of emotion. When Marlowe steps on his high horse to tell the cops, "Until you guys own your own souls you don't own mine," we cheer his impetuosity. When he ignominiously turns away a giddy nymphomaniac, we understand his anger and frustration in trying to make her see that virtue is not a sign of emasculation. And when he toasts himself in the mirror and drinks to one of his fragile victories, we bask in the

private knowledge that he has won, if only by keeping his honor intact.

From 1944 on, Chandler's life became increasingly unsettled, and these changes are reflected in his fiction. He began to work as a Hollywood screenwriter, and although he received Oscar nominations for the screenplays of *Double Indemnity* (which he wrote with Billy Wilder) and *The Blue Dahlia*, Chandler felt abused by the Hollywood system. Moreover, he became increasingly obsessed with the critical status of his fiction. His fifth novel, *The Little Sister* (1949) took him over three grueling years to write, and in this novel Chandler unleashed all his acerbity toward Hollywood. For Marlowe the world has become a "neon-lighted slum." Mired in loneliness and despair, the detective sits in his empty office and cries out, "Let the telephone ring, please. Let there be somebody to call up and plug me into the human race again. . . . Nobody has to like me I just want to get off this frozen star." The image of the frozen star perfectly characterizes Marlowe's world, for it is a place of crystalline beauty and brilliance, but there is no human warmth in its luster. In this novel one no longer questions if Marlowe will win or lose but whether he will have the strength to go on trying.

Chandler was aware that the bitterness of Marlowe had flawed *The Little Sister*, and he struggled to eliminate it from *The Long Goodbye* (1953), his most ambitious novel. Still, he defended the changes in Marlowe, maintaining that his artistic intentions had shifted as he became more concerned with "moral dilemmas rather than who cracked who on the head." Writing to his New York agent, Bernice Baumgarten, he said of *The Long Goodbye*, "I don't care whether the mystery was fairly obvious, but I cared about the people, about this strange corrupt world we live in, and how any man who tries to be honest looks in the end either sentimental or plain foolish." When he sent the first draft of the novel to Baumgarten, she balked at the characterization of Marlowe, whom she felt had become Christlike and, indeed, much too sentimental. Her criticism was valid, and though Chandler reworked the novel, he was unable to recapture the tone of Marlowe's voice in the early novels. Yet, *The Long Goodbye* is in some ways Chandler's most captivating novel, for the detective is no longer a romantic hero seeking damsels to save but a beleaguered man of honor who tries to find friendship, only to become the dupe

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of the insurmountable forces of corruption that engulf his world. Several contemporary critics have suggested that in *The Long Goodbye* Chandler succeeded in his effort to bridge the gap between the detective novel and serious fiction. But those who delve into the magic and mystery of *The Big Sleep* or

Farewell, My Lovely know full well that a superb detective story—like any great romance—also deserves the name of art.

James Thomson

James Thomson is director of American studies at the University of Miami.

Murder by Holocaust

Robert L. Duncan/James Hall Roberts

With the publication earlier this summer of his seventh thriller, Robert L. Duncan has placed himself front and center on one of the sub-theaters of thriller fiction: international business intrigue in a foreign setting. This seventh book, *Fire Storm*, is not, to my taste, Robert Duncan's best book, but it is a good book and it reflects all of the values, plot twists, and writing techniques that have been more disparately present in the six previous books. The three immediately previous books, published from 1970, were written as Duncan, and the three that preceded them, from 1964-67, as James Hall Roberts, a pseudonym Duncan appears to have abandoned.

The company Duncan keeps is diverse but readily identifiable. On the one hand there is Paul Erdman, who has won considerable fame and much income from *The Silver Bears*, *The Crash of '79*, and other all-too-convincing accounts of international skulduggery in the world of high finance. At the other extreme are Jack Higgins and Robert Ludlum, neither of whom can write, a self-evident fact that seems not to bother their readers at all, and who supply urgency, chase, improbability, sex, a paranoid sense of conspiracy, and a world so illogical (*can there be a sillier book than *The Matlock Papers*?*) as to suspend all expectations of rational explanation. In between are such writers as Harry Patterson, Laurence Sanders, and even Joseph Wambaugh (even though he purports to write of the police). Outside this genre is (are?) Emma Lathen, despite the use of the world of banking as the excuse for most of her books.

Six of Duncan's books take place in, or relate closely to, Japan. All show a strong

sense of place, an awareness of how landscape, social environment, climate influence structure. The one novel not set in Japan, James Hall Roberts's second book, *The Burning Sky*, takes place on and near the Papago Indian Reservation in Arizona. This book, which is one of the best, is as alert to social and verbal nuance as are the thrillers which set Western against Japanese culture.

Duncan is interested in the clash of cultures. His heroes, if one may call them that, are all of the West, rational, convinced that determination, planning, and logic bring victory; all are set against villains, if one can call them that, who use instinct, cunning, emotion, to achieve their ends. In each book a slow awareness comes upon the reader that the author not only knows how to do a good job of research—*Temple Dogs*, published last year, shows plenty of research into computer technology and capabilities—but that the organizing principles behind the research are those of the anthropologist, the sociologist, the professional observer of people.

This is not precisely what Robert L. Duncan is, in fact. He is a freelance, highly professional writer, who lives with his wife in Tuttle, Oklahoma, just outside Oklahoma City, and who drives over to Norman, Oklahoma, every few days to teach a course in the School of Journalism. He has lived in Los Angeles, he knows Japan, he is widely read, he confesses to having been deeply influenced by Charles Dickens (among others) as a child, and he keeps up with other thriller writers. But above all, he looks at people, studying them with a steady sense of curiosity. Like a good journalist, he has the easy skill of getting people to talk about themselves, even

when they are supposed to be talking about him, a skill I have had occasion to see him exercise. This, too, is very evident in the books.

The reader's slow awareness is also the protagonist's. Western man begins with the assumption that no problem is beyond the application of knowledge and hard work. Slowly the sense of place reveals that knowledge will unravel the problem only if, by knowledge, one means the ability to respond to an emotional situation in its own terms. Both in the plot construction of the novel, and in the protagonist's ultimate sensitivity to the true nature of his problem, there occurs a moment of unreasonableness. This is generally slightly past the midpoint of each book, where a plot twist suddenly is unacceptable on the basis of the logic that has gone before. In the one book set in Arizona, an archaeologist who sets out to find a colleague lost in the desert lands west of Ajo encounters the Hohokam, a people presumed to have vanished centuries ago. All of the archaeological data provided in the book are sound, the geography well delineated, and only the

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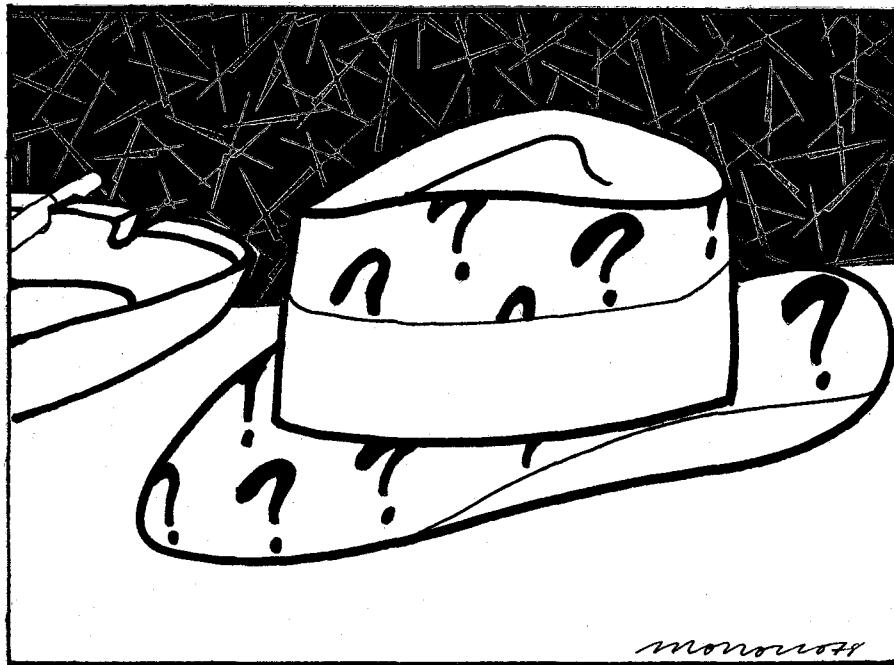
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moment of confrontation seems unreal—and that for a moment only, for as the unreasonable is seen to be reasonable, all else also flows with a logic of its own.

Fire Storm shows the same characteris-

holocaust can be understood only in terms of emotion, for to unleash it is irrational, its results are irrational, and the path of its destruction is irrational. The world of corporate business, Dun-



Drawing by Joe Morrocco

tics. There is much research convincingly and painlessly conveyed, this time on oil tankers. There is a strong sense of place, both of Japan and of the San Pedro/Long Beach harbor area. There is a moment when a ruthless, calculating mid-echelon businessman finds that he has been betrayed by his employers, and uses his conventional weaponry to extricate himself. There is another moment when we realize that logic is not enough, for also involved in the calculus is a variable not open to fine calibration: a leader of the unpredictable Japanese Red Watch. Then comes the moment of unreasonableness, when neither hero nor villain does what would, in an ideally conceived "real world," be the next logical thing to do. Logic, if only for a moment set aside, then produces a new set of causal relationships, a new logic of its own. Man the machine, while still drawing upon his knowledge of technology, all of his awareness of likely corporate behavior, must ultimately commit himself to the path of emotion.

Duncan is fond of holocaust, of fire storm, as a metaphor for technology out of control. There are two such sudden blazes, engulfing the innocent, in his latest book; there is another in *Temple Dogs*; the desert sun in *The Burning Sky* serves the same function; *The Day the Sun Fell*, which is about Nagasaki in 1945, is the most explicit, of course. The

can suggests, thinks of the holocaust as simply another weapon, all life capable of being controlled toward a predicted and desired end. In *Fire Storm* our hero, Corwin, finds himself in conversation with a poised Englishman of great wealth and business acumen, Swann, and the following perhaps unnecessarily obvious interchange takes place:

"I understand your family was involved in whaling at one time."

"Indeed," Swann said.

"Did the whales ever shake loose once the harpoons were imbedded?"

"Rarely, I believe," Swann said. "I'm no expert. But the harpoons were designed to hold, after all."

"I'm on the side of the whales," Corwin said. "Unsuspecting, suddenly barbed, hooked, trapped. No sport there, no chance."

"It was never a sport," Swann said. "And there was never any mystique about it among the professionals. It was an industry, after all. . . ."

"Our hero, Corwin": this is the moment when he shifts gears, for to this point we have seen him as at least as cold as Swann. But now Corwin is also being pursued, from directions he cannot quite fathom (although he believes he does), and there is a moment when he realizes that it is not sport and wishes it were. "Our hero, Corwin": we do not really know him otherwise, for Duncan always refers to him by his last name,

and while he shows him to be resourceful, courageous, and intelligent, he does not make Corwin irredeemably attractive. For reasons perhaps known only to himself, Duncan gives his readers virtually the same figure in every book: Cooper in his first, well-received, novel *The Q Document*; Corman in the next, equally good, *The February Plan*; Cummings in *The Burning Sky*; and then, with James Hall Roberts apparently behind him, a Captain and a Christian in *The Day the Sun Fell*; Calder in *Dragons at the Gate*; Corbett in *Temple Dogs*; and now Corwin. I had dinner with Robert Duncan a few months ago, and he arrived in his Cadillac and ordered the Cordon Bleu.

If the character is consistent, so is the message. Corwin states it more bluntly than any of the other figures upon the high Cs: "Jesus, Corwin thought, they were going to make it impossible in the end, the bureaucrats on one hand who would delay and stall, seeking consensus, and this actor-revolutionary on the other who might decide to change his mind at a moment's notice." Only reason and emotion as handmaids could provide the answer. The first book, *The Q Document*, poses the safe bureaucrat against the man of emotion. The jacket copy poses the questions: Why did Red China want the Q document? Why did the Vatican send someone to buy it? Why did the Nazis believe in it even though its discoverer was a Jew? Why did a Catholic priest now contemplate murder because of it? Each question is rationally put, each is emotionally answered. Each book wrestles with conventional moralities (Catholic priests are frequently present), each explores however briefly the line between animality and love in sexual relations.

Each book also presents a genuine puzzle. Duncan confesses to having read much Ellery Queen when he was 12 or so. He feels that guilt is not capable of rational resolution but punishment may be (and he is interested in reform of our prison system, on which he also has written). He is careful of phrase, and often responds to a question with "exactly so." A bluff, big man, he likes to know exactly where his books are going, and this means that he must see to it that his readers do not. The ultimate figure of evil in *Fire Storm* may come as no great surprise, but there are surprises enough along the way to show that Duncan could imitate his childhood hero if he wished to. We are lucky that he does not wish to, for he has found a unique niche

for himself. In any individual quality, Robert Duncan may not seem as strong as another writer: Tony Hillerman integrates Navaho myth and ritual into his mysteries more successfully than Duncan has done with the Papago; Erdman gives one a more acute sense of the polychrome world of international finance than Duncan does. Taking all of the ingredients together, however, Duncan is the most skillful blender I have encountered. At least three of his books are very good indeed (*Q Document*, *Dragons at the Gate*, *Fire Storm*), and only one is less than good (*Temple Dogs*). While

one may conclude, setting the seven books back to back, that there is little growth, for the plot elements tend to replicate themselves, precisely by setting them back to back can one discover how subtly, how ably, by nuance, phrase, and observation, the steady eye of this author has seen the more clearly the world he reveals.

Robin W. Winks

Robin W. Winks, master of Berkeley College at Yale, is *TNR's* regular mystery chronicler.

Murder in Fact

Wilkie Collins

Wilkie Collins (1822-1889) is not exactly a forgotten writer; but among lovers of detective fiction, it is safe to say that he is more admired than read. T. S. Eliot's assessment of *The Moonstone* as "the first and greatest of English detective stories" has been challenged on various grounds; but it reflects how most detection buffs think of Collins, and with good reason. His list of firsts is formidable: the first British detective story, the first woman detective, the first comic detective, and so on. Such a list impresses without necessarily alluring, especially when the gentle reader discovers, say, that Collins's woman detective, Anne Rodway, is to say the least no Modesty Blaise. Small wonder that dutifully purchased paperbacks of *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* get filed unread between Manning Coles and Conan Doyle, while we get on with the latest P. D. James. Entertainment is our object, and sad experience teaches that it is not always found in Great Classics of the genre.

There is some justice to all this. Collins is of an age and not for all time. With all the goodwill in the world, we simply gag on a novel like *Fallen Leaves*, whose heroine is a golden-hearted prostitute named Simple Sally, and even his best novels contain passages that most of us would wish better. "You villain," Rachel Verinder cries to Franklin Blake at a crucial juncture of *The Moonstone*, "you mean, mean, mean

villain." Granting that a Victorian childhood might inhibit a girl's language, we yet feel that a bit more of something—or a bit less—is needed.

Then, too, Collins is a highly uneven writer. Long in finding himself, he wrote his best novels in one brilliant decade, the 1860s. Then for reasons never adequately explained, the quality of his writing abruptly declined. Deepening opium addiction, overproduction, increased emphasis on "message"—all doubtless contributed to the process; none really explains it. Whatever the reason, about the most one can say about the later novels is that some are less awful than others.

Still, the reader with a minimal tolerance of camp will find much in Collins to enjoy. Anyone who loves good technique in detective fiction will find that the major novels repay close study as few works in the genre do. Collins had grasped as well as Ellery Queen, for example, the oft-reiterated principle that the best place to hide a pebble is on a beach. Thus the central action in *The Moonstone* grows out of a quarrel between Franklin Blake and the physician, Candy, that we hardly notice. Irritated at Franklin's taunts that medicine is useless, Candy slips him a sleeping draught without his knowing it, and thereon hangs the tale. Even though Franklin comments the next morning on how stupefied he feels, drugging does not occur to most of us

because the men's quarrel, like the pebble on the beach, has been well-camouflaged by a whole series of quarrels. At Rachel's birthday dinner, Franklin has upheld French views on sex to the vicar's maiden aunt, deprecated experience as important in breeding bulls to the lord of the manor, and pooh-poohed the spread of democracy to the county member. By the time he gets around to telling the physician that medicine and groping in the dark mean the same thing, the fact does not register on us as having possibly important ramifications.

With similar cunning, Collins slips past the reader the spurious atmosphere that surrounds the moonstone itself—a fabulous diamond that once adorned the head of an Indian idol, has a curse on it, and is attended by sinister Orientals who lurk in the background. If he can get the reader to accept *that*, he is pretty clever, and he does. The sensible and prosaic steward, Gabriel Betteredge, anticipates our objections: "Here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond—bringing after it a conspiracy of living rogues, set loose on us by the vengeance of a dead man . . . Who ever heard the like of it—in the nineteenth century mind; in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution? Nobody ever heard the like of it, and, consequently, nobody can be expected to believe it." But of course we do believe it. If Gabriel, who epitomizes common sense, has been forced against his will to accept the diamond as a fact, we, the readers, can do no less.

Making the diamond believable, too, is Collins's method of narrating the novel through various depositions. That such a method might be an effective way of telling a story occurred to him as a result of a trial that he himself saw: "It came to me . . . that a series of events in a novel

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would lend themselves well to an exposition like this. Certainly by the same means employed here, I thought, one could impart to the reader that acceptance, that sense of belief, which I saw produced here by the succession of testimonies so varied in form and nevertheless so strictly unified in their march toward the same goal." Despite the fantastic events that they treat, the depositions on the whole work as Collins foresaw they would. They contribute, that is, to our sense that we are exploring real-life material regardless of how bizarre it seems. This effect Collins amplifies by having the characters append footnotes, incorporate letters, refer to diaries—just as people in real life would in handling genuine documents.

Collins appeals to our sense of the real in yet another way: wherever his novel touches on matter that can be verified, he makes sure that his facts are right. Thus, when Gabriel Betteredge tells us that June 4, 1848, fell on a Sunday, we can rest assured that it did. Since the novel's calendar corresponds to our own, we accept the novel's tale of murder, intrigue, dope, illicit passion, and hopeless love as likewise corresponding to events that we might experience or observe.

If Collins's other major novels—*The Woman in White* and (for the fanatic) *No Name*, *Armada*, and *Man and Wife*—are not so technically brilliant as *The Moonstone*—all have ample virtues to recommend them. Indeed, each is probably its superior in one way or another. No characters in *The Moonstone*, for example, are drawn with quite the verve that Marion Halcombe and Count Fosco are in *The Woman in White*. All these novels, too, look better and better with the passage of time. Stylistic inadequacies notwithstanding, Collins's best feminine characters like Rachel Verinder and Marion Halcombe know their own minds and keep their own counsel; and for this, we admire them a great deal more than their contemporaries did.

For the detection buff, however, *The Moonstone* remains Collins's supreme achievement. Significantly, every detective-story critic with an axe to

grind sharpens it sooner or later on *The Moonstone*. If he feels that detective stories are symbolic reenactments of primal scene, he finds the evidence he needs in *The Moonstone*. If he feels that detective stories are pernicious purveyors of outmoded class values, he finds a perfect example in *The Moonstone*. Any one such approach is of course misleading or inadequate, but it is a

measure of *The Moonstone's* greatness that it accommodates itself to each. As Dorothy L. Sayers has written, it "comes about as near perfection as anything of its kind can."

E. R. Gregory

E. R. Gregory is professor of English at the University of Toledo.

Murder by Zen

Janwillem van de Wetering

Fate is the result of previous actions, Buddhist thought tells us. If this is so, then we have fate as well as Janwillem van de Wetering to thank for those marvellously ambiguous Zen mysteries written under the guise of Amsterdam police procedurals. Those are the ones with the non-dynamic duo of detectives Grijpstra and de Gier and the Commissaris, their Buddha-figure boss—an odd trio of quirky policemen who puzzle more over the mysteries of everyday life than the murders to be solved. They always are asking why as well as whodunit.

One previous action to shape fate was that van de Wetering left the Netherlands to become a disciple of a Zen master in Kyoto and spent a year and a half in a Japanese Buddhist monastery. Another was that, on his return, he joined Amsterdam's Special Constabulary as a police constable instead of being a soldier or civil reservist.

So, as a result, we now have police procedurals written by a former Buddhist monk who became a spare-time Amsterdam policeman. Zen disciples can write about murder as well as motorcycles, running, or Jerry Brown-style politics.

Near the end of *The Corpse on the Dike*, the Commissaris observes:

"Most of us just live. We do what the current of our life steers us into. We think we make decisions but we don't really. Wernekink made a decision—he refused to conform and he kept on refusing. . . . He refused to be sensible."

"You think that's admirable?" a young policeman asks.

"Don't be too sensible," the Commissaris replies. "If you do you'll never get further than the surface. In our work, we have to go deeper sometimes. . . ."

In his work, as a writer using the device of the police procedural, van de Wetering goes deeper than the surface of chase and pursuit of the criminal. The Commissaris and Detectives de Gier and Grijpstra must deal with the ambiguities of human nature and life as they dig into a victim's past and personality, seek the murderer and his motives, and try to sort out their own lives and thoughts.

There is Grijpstra, miserably married to a woman grown out of the girl that he married into a "blob of semi-solid fats" sitting before the TV and pushing him out of his home. Why do curlers have to be a hideous pink, he wonders and puts off going home. "I never kiss my wife," he says when the Commissaris reminds him of the garlic sauce on the snails. He bangs away at his frustration on a set of drums dumped in his office and sometimes remembers the dreams of his youth when he planned to become a jazz musician.

Sometimes de Gier, who fancies denim suits with a dash of kerchief at the neck, joins Grijpstra on the flute that he carries in his pocket. De Gier, a loner, has his apartment, his balcony plants of geraniums and alyssum, and Oliver, the Siamese cat who loves chopped heart and is jealous of de Gier's bedmates. As a restorative of spirit, he puts the cat on his lap, switches off the lights, opens the balcony door, lights a cigar, and listens to jazz records for hours. "And then it all stops, you know, it stops," he confides to

Correction

An extra word was inserted by mistake in a sentence in Katherine Auspitz's review last week of Theodore Zeldin's book *France, 1848-1945*. The sentence should have read: "Yet, most of what he [Zeldin] says is suggestive; and though the book is not quite, as Voltaire said of Shakespeare, a dunghill strewn with diamonds, there are, if not gems, hundreds of incipient dissertations buried therein."

an old man with the same taste for modern jazz.

And then there is the frail Commissaris (never given a name but addressed only by his commissioned rank), who strokes the painful rheumatism in his left leg and keeps a pet turtle in a wooden box under his garden's rhododendron bushes.

He is a police officer who pauses to listen to the evening song of a thrush on the way to interview a suspect. He treats a lesbian with courtly respect and honestly praises the embroidered bellpull of an ex-cop transvestite. ("But, he, she's mad," protests a disgusted de Gier. "Nonsense," corrects the Commissaris. "Don't bandy that word around, de Gier.")

More often than not, it is the criminals who turn out to be the most interesting characters in mystery novels. But it is the three policemen, originals as human beings, who take over van de Wetering's novels, although his villains and victims also have their fascination. We are more concerned about Grijpstra's escape from his miserable, drab life than we are about the identity of the murderer of the fake religious fanatic in *Outsider in Amsterdam*. And we worry more about de Gier's sorrow over the loss of his cat and mistress than we do about the culprit in *The Japanese Corpse*.

It is not that van de Wetering is writing a Zen philosopher's treatise to the neglect of plot or action. He has ingenious plot puzzles (How was the victim's head smashed by a missile that then disappeared in *Death of a Hawker*? Why was the wedding ring thrown on the floor in *The Blond Baboon*?). A bulldozer duel brings *Death of a Hawker* to a bloody, smashing end. There are boat chases and cemetery confrontations to close out other novels.

But it is mood, character, and atmosphere that dominate van de Wetering's Zen mysteries. We remember Louis, the hostile young man who makes sculpture of wire, string and beads to show a body moved only by outside forces, rather than the details of the murder plot in *Death of a Hawker*. The scene of van de Wetering's novels is Amsterdam today, a civilized, gracious city of old gable houses, bridges, and lovely canals beset with riots over subway construction, drug traffic, and bureaucratic bungling. But unlike the Wahloos, who used the police procedural as a vehicle for criticism of the Swedish welfare state, van de Wetering is more interested in personal documentary than social commentary.

Van de Wetering, like Ross Macdonald, often finds the clues to crime buried in the past of human relationships. Maria van Buren, the sex witch who dies on her lavishly-furnished houseboat in *Tumbleweed*, experiments with the magical plants and brews of her native Curaçao. It is her bastard half-brother, grown into a religious fanatic, who becomes the instrument of her death under the manipulations of a clever murderer. In *The Blond Baboon*, Elaine Carnet, the one-time chanteuse whose affair with an Italian businessman produced a daughter, finds her ex-lover's son has become her daughter's lover a generation later.

Over glasses of jenever in a topless bar or a Chinese restaurant, Grijpstra, de

Gier, and the Commissaris sigh, marvel and brood over such ironies of life and the ways of human nature.

On the closing page of *The Blond Baboon*, published this spring as the sixth van de Wetering mystery novel (the earlier five are now in paperback), Tabriz, de Gier's new cat, keeps knocking over jars of marmalade to make messes. "Why?" Grijpstra asks the ceiling. 'Why, why, why? There'll never be an end to it, and even when you find the answers they invariably lead to more questions.'"

Jean M. White

Jean M. White is a mystery reviewer and Style section reporter for *The Washington Post*, and a freelance TV scriptwriter.

Murder for Two

Richard Lockridge

Richard Lockridge is an American master of the urbane thriller. He complements the intellectual appeal of the puzzle with the velocity and romance of an adventure story and the adroit characterization of a novel of manners. "Critics identify me as a writer of the old-fashioned mystery, which I am," he says. "Which I prefer to the bang-bang school, the private eye who is slugged, knocked unconscious, up without a bruise the next day." Early entries in his oeuvre of 79 mysteries—written alone or in collaboration with his first wife Frances—included timetables and diagrams in the classic mold. These formalities he gradually discarded as he perfected his smooth, fast-paced style. Stories by Lockridge can be located in time, particularly by their language, but there is no dating their essential values: moral probity, courtly male-female relationships, sympathetic public servants, and affection for urban locale.

Lockridge's stories are old-fashioned in that murders and other criminal events are intrusions on a legitimate social order. The pathology of crime is susceptible of logical analysis, violence is kept subordinate to sleuthing, and law enforcers are uniformly fair-minded, well-adjusted, and home-loving guard-

ians of the status quo.

The public did not realize during the period of the Lockridges' husband-and-wife collaboration that, while Frances drafted the general outlines, Richard did all the writing. "Frances suggests interesting villains—I kill 'em off," is how Richard encapsulated the partnership. When the couple came to New York in 1922 to pursue their fortunes in journalism, one of Frances's freelance successes was churning out copy for the Hundred Neediest columns of the *Times*. Frances's write-ups led the list for

**"The best case yet
for Dublin's Chief
of Detectives."***

"Like the early Nicholas Freeling's, these grow upon one. The pace is relaxed...the author's intelligence is evident throughout, and Ireland comes alive, bit by bit. Gill is a writer to watch."—Robin W. Winks,
The New Republic

**McGARR ON THE
CLIFFS OF MOHER**

*Kirkus Reviews
\$8.95

Bartholomew Gill

SCRIBNERS

contributions, Lockridge recalls. "She always was a sob sister at heart." Richard, who had worked as a roustabout in a carnival, a paint scraper for the Navy during the First World War, a letterpress printer for the post office, and reporter for a Kansas City paper, worked at *The New York Sun* in the 1920s and 1930s, most importantly as rewrite man, trial reporter, and drama critic. As afternoon rewrite he was considered "the fastest thing around," Lockridge relates with satisfaction. The training of "getting it very fast and right the first time" stood him in good stead when he switched to professional fiction-writing.

His first fiction book, *Mr. and Mrs. North* (1936), collected the largely autobiographical (of himself and Frances) sketches which had been popular with readers of *The New Yorker* since 1932. The early *New Yorker* pieces portray her eccentric driving, his struggle to balance the checking account, a guest who eats raw hamburger. Inspired by the Thin Man series, the Norths were turned into an amateur detective team in the 1940 novel *The Norths Meet Murder*, the first of 28 novels, a play, a movie, and radio and television series in the 1940s and 1950s featuring Jerry and Pam North.

Pam and Jerry associate with literary crowds, theater people, and other flanks of the New York intelligentsia. Whether they go out on the town or stay home in their Greenwich Village apartment, they are likely to rub shoulders with adventure. In *A Pinch of Poison* (1941), second in the series, Pam remarks, "All our dinners seem to end like this nowadays. With murder." The picture of the Norths at home with cats and sundry guests is unpredictable and wry. Socializing in 25 of the books with their police lieutenant friend Bill Weigand and his wife Dorian, the Norths brainstorm cases. Often Pam puts her finger on the key element, but doesn't know it. Weigand legitimizes Pam's vigilante behavior. But his supervisor, Chief Inspector O'Malley, blows a fuse whenever the Norths connect with the police.

Jerry is the straight man, the George Burns for Pam's Gracie Allen. (Gracie Allen played Mrs. North in the 1941 MGM movie adaptation, but Lockridge feels strongly that Gracie played the fool, not Pam North.) Pam is *sillig*, a wise fool, whose enthusiasm moves her to be the confidante for suspects, to cross swords with murderers, and to shelter endangered innocents. "She builds stiles to help lame dogs over. And sly dogs

begin to limp when they see her," says Weigand. Jerry tries to curb Pam's impulses: "'Listen Pam,' Jerry said, 'wouldn't it be fun just to let Bill do it, for—for a change? Instead of leading with that agreeable chin?'" Both are playfully domestic, chatty. Pam is daffy but not dotty. Jerry has to remind her to put clothes on before stepping out to vet a crime, but Pam's crafty solution to being tailed in *Murder Comes First* (1951) is buying a rust dress to replace the blue one she wears. There is a touch of the soap operatic to many exploits. In *Killing the Goose* (1944), Pam, on the trail of the megalomaniac murderer, confronts him in a radio control room where he is the imposter for a well-known commentator. She goes on the air to a half-million book-lovers. "Help. Help everybody. Dan Beck's trying to kill me. . . just like he killed the others."

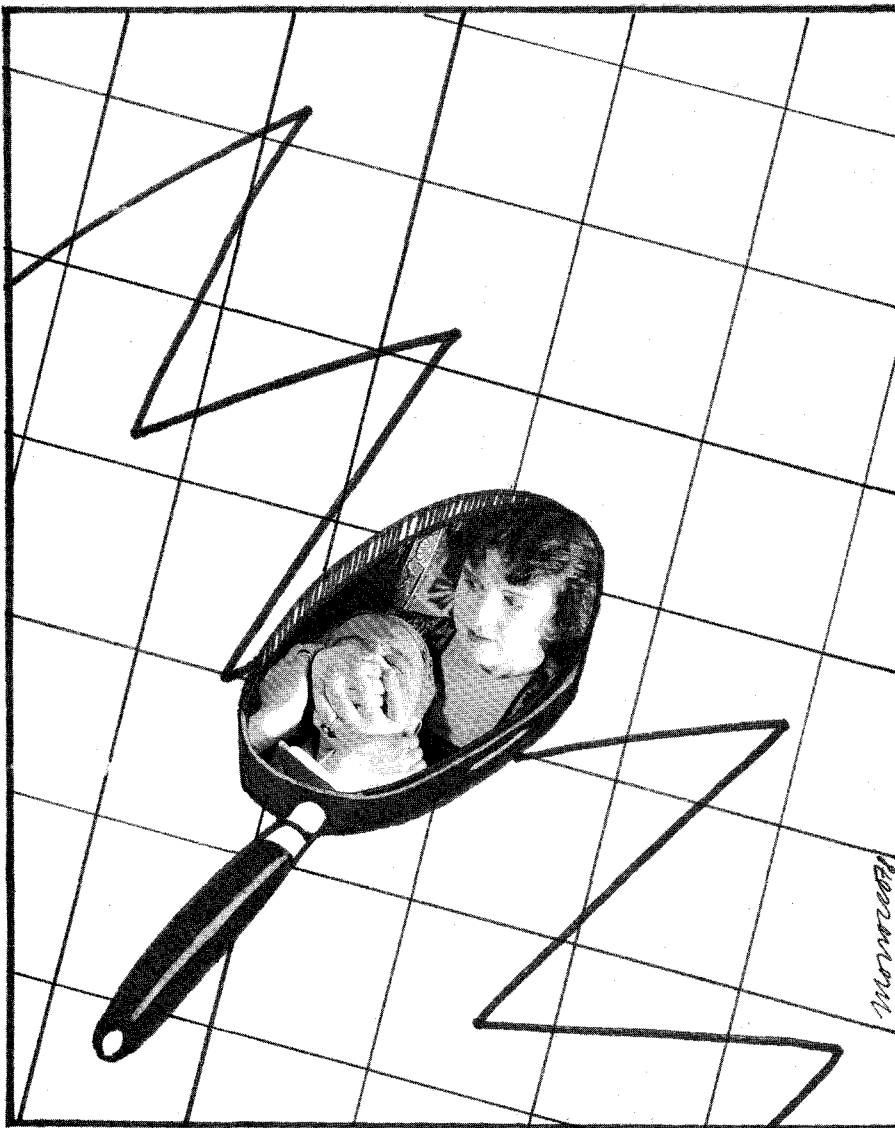
The last Mr. and Mrs. North title has Pam in good form. While her giddy non sequiturs unnerve the harassed sheriff in Key West, her stream of consciousness sleuthing leads her to a surprising catch. Her woman's intuition meshes nicely with the Apollonian style of Weigand and his bunch, though there exists periodic friction. At times, they hold her suspect, while she is not above accidentally digging a spiked heel into the disapproving O'Malley's foot. Intuition, Pam maintains in *Payoff for the Banker* (1945), "merely consists in not going around Robin Hood's barn. It's not taking all the steps. Which doesn't mean the steps aren't there. They're understood." More than most fictional characters, the Norths are versions of their own creators. Lockridge could not write Mrs. North after Frances died in 1963. "Frances was to a considerable degree Mrs. North. And so I abandoned them," he says.

In all the Lockridge mysteries except *A Matter of Taste* (1949), a psychodrama about an epicure who kills for sheer novelty, criminality engages the sleuth's interest, professional or amateur, while leaving his or her persona stable. The emphasis falls on crimes rather than on the criminal mind. The blithest mood is in the North series, where investigating murder offers welcome romps. In *Voyage into Violence* (1956), for instance, the case is a *divertissement* provided the passengers of a pleasure cruiser. Bodies pop up with improbable regularity in the Norths' lives, reminding one of the corpse flying out of the closet in the theater of absurd play *Oh Dad, Poor Dad*. The reader accepts the improbability of these situations because the Norths

are "a lightning rod for homicide."

Usually the bodies are high class. They are found in the apartment upstairs, at parties, in the hotel suite where the Norths stay while their apartment is being painted. Danger such as a conk on the head in *Death of a Tall Man* (1946) only makes Pam more game. In the course of seeking out the perpetrator of the crime, the Norths also seek out the perfect martini, nightclub at the smartest hot spots, dine at the Plaza, and rendezvous at the Algonquin, which is really "them." A cosmopolitan *douceur de vie* cushions the violence.

The urban settings for Lockridge's plots are slices from New York City's cultural quiche. Dyckman (Columbia) University, where Lockridge taught theater, is the setting for scandal in *Murder is Suggested* (1959), *The Drill is Death* (1961), and *Twice Retired* (1970). An anthropologist at Broadly Institute (The Museum of Natural History) is the victim in *Dead as a Dinosaur* (1952). A researcher is found slumped over on her book in the reading room of The New York Public Library in *Murder Within Murder* (1946). Broadway breeds crime in a number of the books, including the fourth, *Death on the Aisle* (1942), as well as *Death of an Angel* (1955) and *Die Laughing* (1967). The narrow streets, casual neighborliness, and cozy restaurants in Greenwich Village, where Lockridge lived for 30 years, provide settings or points of departure for books not only in the North series, but also those featuring detectives John Stein, Paul Lane, Nathan Shapiro, and Assistant District Attorney Bernie Simmons working out of or in conjunction with Manhattan's Homicide West. Lockridge deploys the city's stylish, moneyed class of lawyers, show and media people, as a close-knit geographical-occupational group. This group, comparable to the old world hamlet of English village mysteries, or the theater society of Ngaio Marsh, answers the well-defined human milieu requirement specified for the whodunit by W.H. Auden. Sprawling New York becomes a cosh community, viewed mostly from the upper story windows of its sophisticates, rather than at chaotic street level. The only dimension of the city in fierce relief is physical, its weather, especially sweltering heat waves. All in all, Lockridge's New York is a hospitable place for the young, the vigorous, and the virtuous. Even the city's anomie is therapeutic. For a person wishing to bury past wounds, New York City erases pain. Uprootedness is solved for the person adrift by meeting the



Drawing by Joe Morrocco

right guy or girl, under the police's benign protection.

All of Lockridge's sleuths, whether married or single, have mates, who are also helpmeets in crime detection. An epilogue of the detective and his mate having dinner at the Charles Restaurant or drinks in the Norths' living room or whispering of love and marriage in a small East Side apartment usually follows the unraveling of the puzzle. Reflecting on his fictive couples, the author remarks, "I need a wife. To me the family consists of another person and a cat." His police heroes, in the lineage of Freeman Wills Crofts's Inspector French, discuss cases with their mates and rely on their suggestions. The women create emotional sanctuaries for them, as do the wives of Inspectors Van der Valk and Maigret. Yet these are strong career-minded women with interests of their own. Nora Curran, Bernie Simmons's girl, is an associate editor. Dorian Weigand is a commercial

artist. Captain Heimrich's wife Susan Faye has a fabrics shop that sells her own designs. Rose Shapiro is a high school principal who in the course of the novels featuring her husband as detective earns a doctorate in English.

Lockridge through the early 1960s usually followed a North book with a Captain Heimrich and that with a "chase." After Frances died, a Homicide West tale replaced the North. The chase books, unserialized, sold to the women's magazines; they were generally pot-boilers inferior to the other novels. The clinkers are the tales involving espionage in wartime or cold war, which have been confused and flabby plots. The better chases, like *I Want to Go Home* (1948), *The Golden Man* (1960), and *Death in a Sunny Place* (1971) pile thrill upon thrill and mystification upon mystification with rapid-fire peripatetic incidence. Typically being cheviated is a resourceful ingenue with rich connections but in a numbed condition due to

some unhappy piece of the past. The stimulus of danger and the aid of a protective male eventually quicken her dimmed mind and release her from her cocoon. Wearing tearable nylons and lightweight frocks, the heroines chase across swamps, dodge lurching cars and zinging bullets. Underlying all the chases is a nostalgia for a more settled world which would seem more designed to appeal to Lockridge's readers than expressing his own *Weltanschauung*.

Captain (later Inspector) Merton Heimrich, Lockridge's most frequent character after the Norths, appears in 15 books by Richard and Frances, and 9 more by Richard soloing, from *Murder Out of Turn* (1941) to his most recent *Tenth Life* (1977). An officer of the New York State Police attached to the district which "plunges like a dagger into the side of Connecticut," Heimrich is the only rube among Lockridge's sleuths. He is a romantic family man who reluctantly leaves patio and hearth to track down a criminal at large in Putnam County. Heimrich bleakly compares himself to a hippo when he thinks of his lithesome gray-eyed wife. Murderers fallaciously interpret his lumbering dray-horse manner for hebetude. In fact, Heimrich is a brilliant mind and commanding personality, similar to Perry Mason, with an intelligence acute enough to uncover truth from a welter of lies, false leads, and red herrings.

The narrative explorations into Heimrich's method constitute much of the interest of the series. He combines the sedulous vetting of facts accomplished by Homicide West with the intuitive approach of Pam North. Not a native of Putnam County, Heimrich is unhampered by personal prejudices, and has Susan to fill him in on people's backgrounds. Images for his cross-examinations are seminars in murder and consultations with a doctor or psychiatrist. The inspector encourages people to replay painful incidents, and waits patiently for suspects to commit or

"IF U.S. INTELLIGENCE is to be hamstrung abroad, then what of suspected American subversives in the U.S.? You guessed it -- they are to be given access to FBI files, including confidential information reports. So says Federal Judge Griesa. It will be interesting to see whether in the end the confidentiality of police informants will rate as much protection as informants of the press."

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utter a *bêtise* which commences the tissue of lies shredding. "His mere waiting had a kind of pressure, exercised an implicit compulsion. In some obscure fashion, Heimrich held them within a circle of certain facts, certain memories—certain fears. They all moved within that circle, round and round, tiring as they rounded" (*Spin Your Web, Lady!*, 1949). After their marriage, Susan cures Merton of one of his quirks, mumbling "naturally" when "yes" would do. But he retains his habit of closing his eyes while listening—a way to prevent them from revealing overmuch. The inspector's eyes, like Perry Mason's, are the expressive feature in a granite-hard face.

For clever clues, lamentable second murders, interesting murderers, tingling showdowns, and violence cutting deep into the community, the Heimrichs are Lockridge's most evenly excellent books. Outstanding are *Foggy, Foggy Death* (1950), *Death and the Gentle Bull* (1954), *Let Dead Enough Alone* (1955), *The Distant Clue* (1963), *A Risky Way to Kill* (1969), *Twice Retired* and *Tenth Life*.

Julian Symons points out that the problem in series characterizations is "all the greater when the characters are built up from a few superficial attributes." Lockridge's serialized detectives are rounded and exhibit in successive books character transformation and the resolution of mild inner conflicts. Notably Heimrich and Shapiro strive to evolve: Heimrich to move at a faster clip, not to moon; Shapiro to digest goyish lunches and never sweet enough sherry, take his job more in stride, and fight professional humbuggery. These series identities are no assemblages of ticks but integrated personalities as different as their methods of police procedure. Convinced he lacks the background necessary to grasp complexities of a new case, Shapiro is constantly assailed by a sense of unpreparedness. For instance, why was he, the son of a rabbi, assigned to

the murder of a revivalist minister (*Preach No More*, 1970)? He pleads inadequacy to his boss Weigand, and Weigand listens with a deaf ear.

The detectives created by Lockridge are part of the establishment and accept the basic liberalism of post-New Deal America. They bring more sympathy and penetration to their jobs than the crime investigations per se demand, yet there is little encroachment of work on domestic life. Murder may cut into their after hours but never overwhelms them emotionally, in contrast to the experience of private eyes like Philip

Marlowe, for whom work is everything.

Will Bernie marry Nora? What will Heimrich's stepson do after graduating from Dartmouth? Will Shapiro conquer his self-doubt? For the reader who comprehends that, no matter how you slice it, mystery is melodrama, there is heady satisfaction in following these familiar characters through a saga of rapid-paced, expertly constructed plots.

Jane Filstrup

Jane Filstrup is a New York City freelancer.

The Back of the Book

My Life in Crime

At the age of nine or so, while other kids were gluing stamps from Togoland in a book, or perfecting "Pony Pony" on the upright, I was packing my snub-nosed revolver in a homemade shoulder holster and heading for the street, where my business lay. Since I didn't wear suit jackets at the time, I did not know where a shoulder holster was supposed to be worn, so I wore mine between my shirt and my skin. This was a cold way to wear it; and I knew it looked odd for a nine-year-old to be walking around with a bulge in his shirt the size of a cantaloupe. If my work had not been so vital and dangerous, I might have felt self-conscious.

My work was being a detective, and I was by far the most daring and diligent detective in the neighborhood. It was routine, for example, for me to jot down all the license plate numbers on my block, so that if someone were to make a sudden getaway, I could track him down in minutes. You may not remember the famous Vicessi hardware store robbery case, but it was I who collected the cigarette butts on the sidewalk in front of Vicessi's in order to study them for prints and tobacco brands. My most serious work involved following suspicious-looking grown-ups—always at a distance which allowed me to be spotted (for if my quarries didn't know they were being followed no one else would either). I wonder what those fellows thought as they turned and saw a kid with a cantaloupe in his shirt 20 paces behind them. Trouble—that's

what they thought.

Now that I wear suit jackets regularly, I do not sport a shoulder holster anymore (ironic), and I've also given up taking down license numbers and tailing murderers. Yet, while I have been forced by convention to give up being a detective, I have not given up the dream. Nothing would make me happier than to pick up the phone, and hear the chief inspector say: "Mr. Rosenblatt, this is a sticky one. We need your help." Since that call has not yet come through, I settle for reading detective novels, getting as close as a dull man can to that manner of heroism to which I'd like to believe I was born.

Exactly why I'd like to believe this, I have not worked out; and perhaps—as Philo Vance used to say—there are some mysteries that ought not to be solved. But I do know that my fascination with detective work is not unique. Every year, especially in this season, millions of my fellow dreamers curl up in summer storms and enter the worlds and minds of Holmes, Poirot, Marlowe and Spade. There is no experience like it, nothing on earth at once so tantalizing and satisfactory.

Of course, the worlds and minds of Holmes *et al.* are quite different from each other. Neither the tantalizations nor the satisfactions offered by the reasonable Poirot are those of the intuitive Vance; nor does John D. MacDonald's Florida of the '50s appeal in the same way as Ross Macdonald's California of the '40s, or S.S. Van Dine's

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New York of the '30s, or Agatha Christie's quaint parsonages. What is common to these stories is the nature of the detective, and that is their central



Philo Vance in "The Last Murder Case"

appeal. Detectives are grown-ups with their self-esteem intact. There is every reason to admire them:

For one thing, a detective solves crimes, and other grown-ups don't. Other grown-ups live with crime, and call it something else.

For another; a detective has a specific mission, which, like a classical play, has a beginning, middle and end.

For a third; a detective operates from a sense of order. A murderer is a romantic; he thinks he can remake the world. A detective is both a romantic and a realist; he thinks he can improve the world by catching the murderer. And in fact he does so, for a time. That he understands his improvements are only for a time, yet makes them nevertheless, is all the more admirable.

Finally, a detective knows right from wrong, and acts on the difference. Yet he lives in mystery with style. That may be his deepest appeal.

As this list of virtues indicates, a very few people are cut out to be detectives; and if the bitter truth be known, I'm not really sure I'm among the few. A major ingredient of detective work is loneliness, which has no appeal at all, so it was probably just as well that I quit the game while I was still on top. Besides, it's a good deal simpler to lead a normal grown-up life. Now I can walk down the street like everyone else, knowing the person behind me is inside me.

Roger Rosenblatt

With this column ends my tenure as literary editor of TNR. My deep thanks to my colleagues and readers, who have made this work a great honor and pleasure. R.R.

Correspondence, from page 7

("Me First," TNR, June 17), for the magazine has shown some skepticism about the pure liberal ideology.

Particularly unrealistic as well as insensitive is your:

But there is an exception—one that reveals the narrow selfishness of the amendment most starkly; a house can be reassessed up to its full market value after it changes hands. Present homeowners are protected; future homeowners are on their own.

There is no reason to assume that all owners of homes of equal market value have equal incomes and equal ability to pay property taxes. One \$90,000 residence may have been purchased twenty years ago for \$20,000, and its retired owner may be living on a reduced income, while the house next door may be sold next year to a purchaser who, if he has sufficient income to pay for the house, will presumably have sufficient income to pay the increased tax. Assessing property taxes on market value is a negation of the principle that taxes should be based on the ability to pay.

It is the poor, not the rich, who are hurt by high property taxes. The rich can deduct property taxes from income, but lower income people may have little or no taxable income from which to make deductions. The real danger in Jarvis-Gann is not what it will do to the California property tax structure, but the real probability that it can turn into a nationwide movement for federal and state income tax cutting.

Predictably local governing bodies moved quickly to cut fire and police and library services and schools, while leaving untouched consultants' fees, agencies and their salary and travel expense costs, and the continuation of redevelopment schemes that have for their apparent purpose the bailing out of the owners of deteriorated business and rental property.

C.D. Norling
Richfield, Minnesota

To the editors:

The message of Proposition 13, I believe, was more than just one of selfishness; it was a statement to government officials to tighten up on the administration of

(continued on page 40)



A built-in mutual aid system

providing material help and moral support to its members—that is the strength of the network of kinship described in **THE BLACK EXTENDED FAMILY** by Elmer P. Martin and Joanne Mitchell Martin

"Too many studies of the black family," write the Martins, "have focused on what is wrong with it—the pathology-disorganization perspective—or on why it has survived—the strength-resiliency perspective." They found that looking merely at household composition can distort the picture. A household with absent father that appears to be a broken home may really be a vital part of a strong and flexible extended family.

The Martins, both members of extended families themselves, describe the composition of such families whose members may be scattered widely and which must be headed by a respected dominant figure. They interviewed, over a period of eight years (1969-77), members of thirty extended families in two small-town areas in Missouri and Florida and in two urban areas, Cleveland and Kansas City. They talked to the old and the young, the affluent and the poor—some six hundred of the more than one thousand members of those thirty families.

The Martins also examine the strains put on family ties by urban life and suggest that, although the extended family can do little to help its members attain the full participation in the American economy that still eludes them, it can provide an invaluable sense of solidarity and personal worth in an alienating environment.

THE BLACK EXTENDED FAMILY \$10.95
University of Chicago Press

taxpayers' money. It should be viewed as a symptom of the increasing separation of government from the people. This has occurred because many people have neither the time nor the inclination to educate themselves on the enormous changes which have taken place in our system as we have assumed greater responsibility for the well-being of all members of our society. Admittedly, this is an unhappy truth, but the complexities of modern government go a long way to explain it.

Dorris R. Knight
Northampton, Massachusetts

Fill me in

To the editors:

Wolf Von Eckardt is dropping names again ("The Cranbrook Academy of Art," *TNR*, June 24). Architecture is not social history in a personal sense. Knowing who FLW visited or whose son sponsored what can chronicle the development of peanut growing since Carver or the history of the diagnosis and treatment of piles. He knows so little that he has to embellish his phrases with P.R. platitudes like "delightful," "constant surprises," "whimsical" and "lovable."

We live around buildings all our lives. They set our patterns of motion and behavior yet we don't "see" them or "know" them. Who will lead us to this learning, elevation, understanding? Certainly not the name-dropper who drips platitudes—tell him to go read some good books and stop embellishing mediocre thoughts with word flowers.

M.S. Grobsmith
Springfield, Illinois

Coming Next Week:
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THE NEW REPUBLIC
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One recent morning's paper carried two columns datelined Edgartown, Massachusetts. Summer has come once more to the reflective trades. Hobart Rowen, financial columnist for *The Washington Post*, was there at the Martha's Vineyard resort for some sort of gathering of economists. James Reston was just there. A few days later John Oakes of the *Times* was opining—about Hungary—from Chilmark, also on Martha's Vineyard. The Harvard professors whom we at *TNR* often seek out for spiritual guidance on a wide variety of matters all seem to be at "the Cape" (not Cape Canaveral). Even Stanley Kauffmann has informed us by memo that he can be reached during July and early August "c/o Centro Culturale della Fondazione Rockefeller," which appears to be a villa on Lake Como. Of course what's nice about being a brainworker is that these immigrations don't count as vacation time. If you set it up right, the whole thing may even be deductible. What's amusing in the case of certain columnists is how little impact the change in locale seems to have on their products. If anything, those mysterious signals about the course of world events that escape the rest of us even in the midst of the throbbing metropolis come more clearly than ever to the pundits on their wind-swept beaches.

Back here in Washington, the general counsel of the National Endowment for the Humanities is investigating charges that (delicate sensibilities may wish to skip the rest of this item) Endowment employees and summer interns spent some working hours arranging a birthday party for Joe Duffey, the Endowment chairman (I warned you it was rough). These days all the dancers know the steps of the *menuet de scandale*: the anonymous sources at the Endowment who leaked the story, the newspapers that picked it up, even Duffey himself, who said he was "absolutely shocked" at the revelation. Members of the Endowment old guard planted the story because they don't like Duffey. I can't help wondering how many glasses of champagne these officials have lifted at government expense. If the effort devoted to Duffey's party had gone instead toward a reception in connection with some humanities conference, or perhaps to a supper at the Kennedy Center following the premiere of a public television series, there would be

no fuss. For that matter Duffey's wife Anne Wexler, who planned the birthday party, is getting nothing but praise for the little kaffeeklatsches she runs in the Roosevelt Room of the White House for lobbyists and other Washington regulars. President Carter has hired her to cultivate. Arranging and attending social occasions on company time is another thing that makes brainwork so pleasant, and I imagine this is especially true where the upper echelons of the political and cultural professions intersect. But presumably Duffey's partisans at the Humanities Endowment have been sufficiently chastened, and henceforth will devote their working hours (as their enemies apparently have done) to the serious business of office politics.

And speaking of politics and culture, I really hate to spill any thoughts on this ponderous subject without the benefit of a grant from somebody, but I was struck by a question Robert Brustein posed in these pages a few weeks ago. "Christ began with twelve disciples before his teachings became the basis for a world religion," Mr. Brustein pointed out. "Would he have been denied a grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities because the people were not participants in shaping his thought?" The answer, of course, is no. Christ more likely would have been denied a grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities because he wasn't a fellow of the Pontius Pilate Center for Humanistic Studies, or similarly well plugged into the cultural establishment of the day. But Mr. Brustein avoids the really interesting question, which is: What would Christ have done with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities? No doubt it is a miracle that he started a world religion without one; no one would attempt it today. Surely it should be a requirement of any NEH grant that the grantee keep this question in sight at all times. I'm confident Mr. Brustein always has done so during his many acts of grantsmanship in the past; and now that Yale has deposed him as dean of its drama school, he has more reason than ever to feel Christ-like.

Within days after the Supreme Court's ruling that the established media are subject to search warrants just like everybody else, stories began surfacing in the papers about the "chilling effect" this was having on journalists' ability to

gather news. So far the chill seems to be mostly psychological. The decision "has scared a hell of a lot of reporters," a CBS producer told a congressional committee. No one has yet claimed that the First Amendment gives reporters a constitutional right not to be scared, but I suppose the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press will try that one too before long. For two centuries, we have been given to believe, prosecutors have been champing at the bit, waiting for the opportunity to ransack newspaper offices on the slightest pretext. It seems more likely to me that it never occurred to most prosecutors to try to get search warrants against newspapers until the current noisy special pleading put the thought in their heads. When will journalists get a little perspective about their own role in the scheme of things? I see that the American Newspaper Publishers Association even opposes FCC regulations against junk phone calls on the grounds that they "could be interpreted to inhibit constitutionally protected news-gathering activity."

The government building next door to *TNR*'s offices has a very good cafeteria and take-out stand (for some reason) where I often go for a sandwich. The principal occupant of the building is something called the Community Services Agency, which is what Nixon turned the Office of Economic Opportunity into. After a decade of neglect, with all its important programs either transferred away or cancelled, the place seems to be a bureaucratic cul de sac, functioning primarily to confirm conservatives in their suspicion that most of what government does is a waste of time. I was surprised, therefore, to read in *Parade* magazine that CSA has been chosen as a "Category A" government agency that—along with the White House, the cabinet departments, the CIA and a few others—has top priority to be kept functioning in case of a nuclear attack. Selected CSA officials have guaranteed reservations at Mt. Weather, the hollowed-out mountain in West Virginia to which the government will adjourn when the Russians decide that politicization of the arts has finally gone too far. It's nice to know that after the bomb there will still be conferences on family values in an urban environment and ethnic awareness festivals for the handicapped.

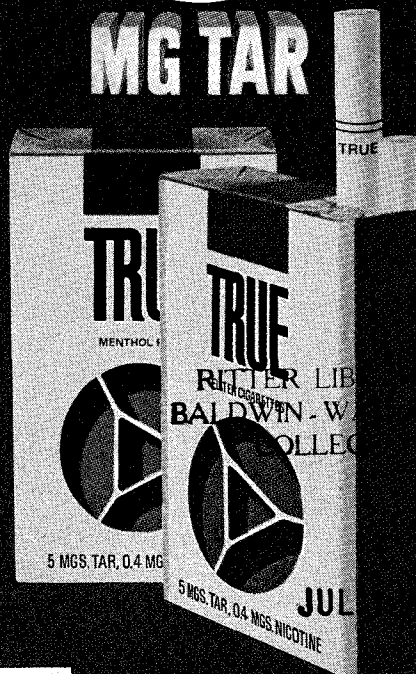
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